NORTHERN PSALMS IN SOUTHERN CONTEXTS: DEFINING A HISTORICAL SETTING FOR THE PSALMS OF ASAPH

by

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Abstract

The psalms of Asaph (50, 73-83) present an intriguing problem for their interpreters. Though these psalms show every sign of being used in the temple at Jerusalem, they contain a ponderous amount of traditions, geographic references, and names that would be more appropriate in Israel's northern kingdom. The haphazard geographic and tradition-history provenance of these psalms is best reconciled by assuming a fundamental mixture between northern and southern material in the growing and cosmopolitan city of pre-exilic Jerusalem, beginning in the time of Hezekiah. As northern psalmists moved to Jerusalem after the conquests of the Assyrian empire in the late 8th c. BCE, they brought their traditions of worship and assimilated these traditions within the liturgies of Jerusalem's temple. These psalms illumine how northern Israelites accommodated to their new Jerusalemite setting after 722 BCE, and how their psalms reflect their experience of forced displacement.

For Melissa and Sophia,

Proverbs 3:13
אַשְׁרֵי אָדָם מָצָא חָכְמָה

Proverbs 18:22
מָצָא אִשָּׁה מָצָא טוֹב

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Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	*The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Edited by David Noel Freedman. 6 vols. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1992
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
ANEP	*The Ancient Near East in Pictures Relating to the Old Testament*. 2nd ed. Edited by James B. Pritchard. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954
ANES	Ancient Near Eastern Studies
ANET	*Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament.* Edited by James B. Pritchard. 3rd ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969
AnOr	Analecta Orientalia
BA	*Biblical Archaeologist*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BN	*Biblische Notizen*
BZAW	*Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
CAD	*The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.* Edited by Ignace J. Gelb., etc. 21 vols. Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1956-2006
CBQ	*Catholic Bible Quarterly*
COS	*The Context of Scripture*. Edited by William W. Hallo. 3 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1997-2002
D	The Deuteronomic Source
Dtr	The Deuteronomist
DtrH	The Deuteronomistic Historian
DULAT	*The Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language according to Alphabetic Transcription*. Georgio del Olmo Lete and Joaquín Sanmartin. 2 vols. Translated by Wilfred G.E. Watson. Leiden: Brill, 2003.
E	The Elohistic Source
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
GKC	*Gensenius' Hebrew Grammar*. Edited by Emil Kautzsch. Translated by Arther E. Cowley. 2nd ed. Oxford: Claredon, 1910
HALOT	*The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, and Johann J. Stamm. Translated and edited under the supervision of Mervyn E.J. Richardson. 4 vols Leiden: Brill, 1994-1999
HdO	Handbuch der Orientalistik
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
IBHS	*An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax.* Bruce K. Waltke and Michael O'Connor. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990

ICC	International Critical Commentary
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*
J	The Yahwistic Source
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JBLE	*Journal of Biblical Literature and Exegesis*
JBQ	*Jewish Bible Quarterly*
JM	Joüon, Paul. *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*. Translated and revised by T. Muraoka. 2 vols. Rome: Pontifical Institute, 1991
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSOTSS	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies*
KAI	*Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften*. Herbert Donner and Wolfgang Röllig. 5th ed. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2002
KTU	*Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit*. Edited by Manfried Dietrich, Oswald Loretz, and Joaquín Sanmartín. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2013
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OTL	Old Testament Library
P	The Priestly Source
RB	*Revue Biblique*
RBL	*Review of Biblical Literature*
RIMA	The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Periods
RSR	*Religious Studies Review*
SAA	State Archives of Assyria
SBL	Studies in Biblical Literature
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature, Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature, Monograph Series
SJT	*The Scottish Journal of Theology*
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
TA	*Tel Aviv*
UT	*Ugaritic Textbook.* Cyrus H. Gordon. AnOr 38. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
WAWSS	Writings from the Ancient World, Supplement Series
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
ZABR	*Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtgeschichte*
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZDPV	*Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins*

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 History in the Psalms

The modern study of ancient Israel's history is, understandably, largely based on the narrative texts of the Hebrew Bible. These narrative works are often the standard by which the history of Israel is constructed and the historical situations of other texts, like the Psalms, have to fit within. Scholars often recognize other texts, like the prophets, as historical sources, and the social or political references from these books are placed within the framework established by the historical books. If this obtains in the poetry of the prophetic books, perhaps the Psalter could just as well reflect episodes in Israel's history. Despite not having as defined of a historical setting as the prophets, the psalms of Israel's worship are no less historically conditioned. Their songs of worship would have continued to be contextual witnesses to the realities of war, empire, and social upheaval. Through these trying events, both liturgists and worshippers were forced to reconcile their own life experience with their relationship with God.

Typically, whenever individual psalms are dated by scholars, each psalm is relegated to one of the following categories: pre-exilic, exilic, or post-exilic. These are helpful categorizations, and they highlight the macro-level processes through which Israel's religion and traditions developed over time. However, by using only these three broad categories, one cannot place these psalms in dialogue with discrete stretches of time in Israel's history. Psalms scholarship of an older era was fond of placing specific psalms with situations during the Maccabean revolt and ensuing events. Modern scholarship has granted the Psalms more antiquity, but, especially under Gunkel's influence, historical questions became subservient to those of genre and a more general *Sitz im Leben*. Gunkel rightly contested the fanciful interpretations of his time that focused on minute supposed allusions, and chose to look at the literary forms instead. The notion of ascribing specific historical events based on references in the Psalms has fallen out of favour,

and perhaps for good reason.[1] What remains for Psalms scholarship is to find some sort of methodology for determining these historic locations that is neither extreme, nor avoids the question altogether. If certain psalms can exhibit intersecting lines of evidence, perhaps scholars would be able to both curb the excesses of previous generations and add a measure of specificity to the cautious approach of modern scholars.

In accord with the standard terminology in the study of the Hebrew Bible, recent diachronic treatments of the psalms by Broyles and Day only allow three broad-stroke categories into consideration: pre-exilic, exilic, and post-exilic.[2] Each of these groups are defined by their relationship to the Archimedean point of Israel's history: the Babylonian exile in 586 BCE, and the subsequent return under Cyrus the Great. Given that a dominant concern in ancient Israel was the relationship between God, his people, and their land, forced deportations or territorial displacement would leave deep and indelible scars upon communities, and leave traces in their literary productions. "Exile" is a phenomenon in the realm of biblical studies that rightly finds its greatest expression in the movement of Judahite captives to Babylon. This event was foundational in the formation of Judahite identity, the inscripuration of wide swaths of texts and traditions, and the development of the Jewish religion. The Judahites, however, were not the first people in their region to endure an exile from their homeland. Other neighbouring states were at the mercy of deportation by Babylon and Assyria, but perhaps the most overlooked case of exile

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[1] In this respect, James Luther Mays is representative when he laments, "Of course, the difficulties that arise in giving psalms interpretive identity and context are well known—the tension between the actuality of so many psalms and the ideal Gattung to which they are assigned, the unresolved questions of cultic history, the perplexing problem of the identity of the individual, the effect on meaning of moving traditional forms and words into quite different periods of religious history and the extent of redaction in the Psalter" (James Luther Mays, "The Question of Context in Psalms Interpretation," in *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter*, ed. Clinton J. McCann Jr. [Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993], 14).

[2] Craig Broyles, "Memories, Myths, and Historical Monuments: Yahweh's Developing Character in the Psalms," in *Interested Readers: Essays on the Hebrew Bible in Honour of David J.A. Clines*, ed. James K. Aitken, Jeremy M.S. Clines, and Christl M. Maier (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 27-47; and John Day, "How Many Pre-Exilic Psalms are There?" in *In Search of Pre-Exilic Israel: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar*, ed. John Day (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 225-250. Instead of arguing for the date of a psalm based solely on individual references within them, these authors examined psalms in groups based on their generic categories and their dominant themes. The categories that Day proposes, and that Broyles follows, are royal psalms (e.g. Pss 2, 110), psalms of Zion (e.g. Pss 46, 48), references to the Ark (e.g. Pss 24, 68, 132), enthronement psalms (e.g. Pss 47, 96), and communal laments implying an army (e.g. Pss 44, 60), while some psalms had unique themes that tied them to the pre-exilic period (e.g. Pss 78, 104, 50, 51). Broyles adds to Day's findings by looking at the psalms within these categories as representative of different stages of Israel's religion. Day's comment at the conclusion of his article qualify his findings: "It must be admitted, however, that even when we can assign a psalm to the pre- or post-exilic era, it is usually not possible to know the date more precisely within these periods" (Day "How Many," 245).

in the biblical world is that of Israel, Judah's northern neighbour. Much of the Hebrew Bible was transmitted through and composed in Judah, so the experience of exile throughout much of this literature, as in Lamentations or Second Isaiah, is certainly located there. The book of Psalms, on the other hand, has a wide variety of imported northern traditions and songs—some of which are are often dated to the period of the Babylonian exile and assigned Judahite provenance. Given the destruction of northern Israel's homeland almost a century before Jerusalem's fall, it would not be surprising to find vestiges of the psychological and sociological trauma of a particularly *Israelite* exilic experience buried in various texts in the Psalms.[3] The now-standard division of Psalms into three dating categories needs to account for the profound effect of northern Israel's exile.

Scholars have long noted the presence of northern texts and traditions within the whole of the Hebrew Bible—the Psalms are no exception. Despite this recognition by most commentators, there has not been much attention paid to the mechanisms by which northern psalms could become part of a southern corpus of literature. Unlike northern texts in other portions of the Hebrew Bible, which may have been restricted in use to scribal circles, northern psalms became part of the public expression of worship at the Jerusalem temple. These psalms were not simply incorporated into a collection of authoritative scrolls to be stored in the scribe's workshop, but were also adopted as a means of worship at the Judahite sanctuary. Few psalms that are labelled "northern" are explicitly so, and intertwined with northern references are a host of southern features. Because the relationship between north and south was not always amiable, and the kingdoms maintained distinctions between each other, finding the bounds of an appropriate historical setting for this textual interaction in Jerusalem's temple would provide the exegete

[3] Daniel Fleming suggests that other pieces of literature in the Bible are the product of this specific northern experience. In his comments on the setting for the Jacob narrative, he notes: "… the Jacob story in its current form is framed by a forced departure linked to promise of return in a way that could be assumed 'exilic' in the Babylonian sense except that the contents are so overwhelmingly Israelite. Unless this is just an expression of a universal and powerful theme of loss and hope, one explanation would be that the narrative is indeed 'exilic,' but the exile is Israelite and the emotion that of an older calamity, brought about by Assyria in the late eighth century" (Daniel Fleming, *The Legacy of Israel in Judah's Bible: History, Politics, and the Reinscribing of Tradition* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012], 320-321).

with a context through which to interpret the psalms.[4] Those from northern Israel fleeing the destruction wrought by the Assyrians in 722 BCE found a home in Jerusalem with their southern neighbours. Not only did they likely bring some already written material with them, but they also certainly brought their own musical and liturgical traditions as well. As they were forced to interact with this new religious and political environment, they brought their inherited intellectual traditions to bear on the new situations in which they found themselves. The psalms they produced—the psalms of Asaph (Pss 50, 73-83)—reflect their creative activity from the time of their arrival into Jerusalem until the beginning of the exile. In addition to the three general periods of classifying the date of a given psalm (pre-exilic, exilic, post-exilic), this thesis will argue that one more criteria can be added for determining a psalms historical location: the presence of both northern and southern elements reflects literary activity in Jerusalem's temple between the fall of Israel (722 BCE) and the destruction of Jerusalem (586 BCE).

1.2 History of Research in the Psalms of Asaph

The psalms of Asaph have occupied a small corner of the modern discussion on the Psalter, and various dates for its composition or identities for its tradents have been proffered by a number of scholars. Though scholarly concern related to them often lies in different places (form criticism, redaction criticism, etc.), the psalms of Asaph (50, 73-83) have prompted a number of different scholars to attempt to find either a historical or a social location for this grouping of psalms. Beginning with Delitzsch at the end of the 19th c., researchers have occasionally attempted to examine these psalms with special focus on their relation to a purportedly historical figure of Asaph. The benefit of examining a collection such as this is that it stands apart from previous attempts to date a psalm only by genre or tradition-history, such as can be done, for example, with the enthronement hymns or songs about the ark. The starting point for these

[4] Though his comments are not directed to the psalms of Asaph, Sarna's observations on the context of psalms agrees with this thesis: "It seems inconceivable that great and historic events should not have evoked creative liturgical responses, or that some psalms, even if tied to the cult, should not betray the influence of important, innovative, movements in Israel's intellectual and religious development. The fact that, for example, a national lament employs a certain conventional literary pattern, does not mean that an inspired poet would not compose such a lament in a specific set of circumstances which it might be possible to reconstruct. Similarly, a strikingly new theological concept might well be traced to its historic setting even though the externals of style and form hew closely to well-documented stereotypes" (Nahum Sarna, prolegomena to *The Psalms Chronologically Treated with a New Translation*, by Moses Buttenweiser [New York: Ktav, 1969], xxxiv)

researchers is the curious ascription of these psalms to Asaph, as well as their numerous commonalities. Because the topic of this thesis relates specifically to the origin and date of the psalms in this collection, the following examples of scholarly inquiry will be analyzed according to two primary concerns: date and geographic provenance.

1.2.1 Attempts at Finding Origins and Dates for the Psalms of Asaph

One of the earliest attempts at finding dates for the psalms of Asaph was by Crawford H. Toy.[5] His contention was that the titles of these psalms have negligible value for determining a date, and he preferred to judge each psalm individually without reading these psalms as having anything other than a superficial connection. According to his analysis, some of them came from as early as the fifth century, but many stemmed from specific events in the Maccabean wars.[6] If the superscription to this group of psalms provides no unifying force to the collection, each individual psalm is subject to isolated analysis. Similarly, other commentators dismiss the relevance of the superscriptions found in these psalms (לאסף) as a non-factor to understand the psalm's context,[7] and assume a disconnect between the title and the context of the psalm. For them, the superscription is considered only in reference to that psalm's history of interpretation and adoption by a later Asaphite guild, not to the circumstances of its origin. As regards to date, and in agreement with Toy, Hossfeld and Zenger are representative of the general assumption in Psalms scholarship that the Asaph psalms were not created by the same tradition group, and that many of these psalms come from a post-exilic date.[8]

Franz Delitzsch, one of the earliest commentators on the Psalms in the modern era, treated the psalms of Asaph as a definable collection, though he did not assume they stemmed from the same historical era. Some were composed by the "aged Asaph," but the literary habits of his

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[5] Crawford Howell Toy, "On the Asaph-Psalms," *JBLE* 6 (1886): 73-85.

[6] Toy, "On the Asaph-Psalms," 81, 83.

[7] cf. Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 1-59: A Commentary*, trans. Hilton C. Oswald (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1993), 66; Marvin Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, WBC 20 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990).

[8] Hossfeld and Zenger, however, are unique in that they claim that a large part of Book II and some of Book III of Psalms (50-83) was edited by an Asaphite group.The Asaphite group of psalms had taken an already arranged collection of Davidic songs (51-72) and inserted them between the Asaphite psalms 50 and 73 (Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, *Psalms 2: A Commentary on Psalms 51-100*, trans. Linda M. Malony [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005], 4).

descendants were continued from the time of David through the return from exile.[9] He noted five key observations about this group that set it apart from the rest: 1) unlike the Korahite collection, the Asaphite collection is entirely within the Elohistic Psalter; 2) the collection is distinct in its content because of its prophetic and juridicial character (2 Chr 29:30); 3) there is an emphasis on historical events in Israel's past (Pss 74, 77, 80, 81, 83); 4) there is a tendency to recount the stories of Joseph rather than Judah; and, 5) these psalms frequently describe the people of God as flocks, with God as their shepherd.[10] His reconstruction of the Asaphite guild's activity is largely based on an uncritical reading of the book of Chronicles, where Asaphites sang under David (1 Chr 16:5), Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 20:14), and Hezekiah (2 Chr 29:13), and Asaph himself is described as a חֹזֶה (seer), perhaps supporting the presence of the prophetic psalms in the corpus (50, 75, 81, 82). Delitzsch's interpretation of Asaph has not aged well, as the religious and political environment of ancient Israel is regarded as much more complex than what Delitzsch assumed, and his attribution of the Asaphite traditions over a 500 year period is easy enough to imagine, but difficult to sustain. However, he was an early advocate suggesting that, in addition to their superscription, these psalms could be connected on the basis of their common content.

One of the first attempts at providing a specific social location to the psalms of Asaph was Martin Buss. Besides maintaining that these psalms were products of the Levitical class, he contended that the psalms of Asaph have a northern provenance on the basis of the prominence of Joseph, similarities with Hosea, and the apologetic thrust of Psa 78 towards the Davidic line.[11] He was more concerned with the study of malleable traditions than the question of a text's first date of composition or original context, so his discussion did not venture too far into issues of dating.[12] These Asaphite Psalms fall into "an originally or heavily North-Israelite deuteronomic-Levitical tradition,"[13] and, along with the psalms of Korah (43-49; 84-85; 87-88), represent a specifically clerical contribution to the Psalter.[14] His research is unique in that he argued for a Levitical origin based on internal evidence within the psalms, rather than on drawing parallels

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[9] Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament: Psalms*, trans. James Martin, 3 vols (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1949), 2:124.

[10] Delitzsch, *Psalms*, 2:125-126.

[11] Martin Buss, "Psalms of Asaph and Korah," *JBL* 82 (1963): 383-385.

[12] Buss, "Psalms of Asaph," 388.

[13] Buss, "Psalms of Asaph," 388.

[14] Buss, "Psalms of Asaph," 392.

with the material concerning Asaph in Chronicles. Their association with the Levites and worship was drawn from the presence of communal laments, historical recitations, judgment songs, and a focus on the sanctuary. Buss was generally cautious in assigning a particular date to each psalm, but read a unifying tradition behind a group of texts that he thought could reasonably be placed in the late 8th c. or 7th c. BCE.

Nasuti's revised dissertation on the Asaphite Psalms was formally an exercise in tradition criticism. His concern was that previous attempts at determining the nature of Asaph's tradition had been characterized by unduly subjective thematic categories for distinguishing these psalms from others.[15] To correct these errors, he isolated various linguistic and generic content from the psalms of Asaph, and then compared these data with known tradition groups from elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible. His results were formulated from two separate categories: linguistic evidence of traditions and form-critical points of comparison. He found that these psalms witness a common linguistic stock which share internal links with the Asaphite collection, as well as links within a broader Ephraimite tradition.[16] This tradition originated in the north, but was able to manifest itself in later Judahite documents, and included the Deuteronomist, the Elohist, Hosea, and Jeremiah.[17] With regard to form criticism, he noted a disproportionate prominence of communal laments (74, 79, 80, 83) and prophetic oracles (50, 75, 81, 82) when compared to the rest of the Psalter.[18] Not every psalm in the collection exhibits these connections, but Nasuti sees enough correspondence between the psalms to suggest a unity of tradition behind the

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[15] Harry P. Nasuti, *Tradition History and the Psalms of Asaph*, SBLDS 88 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 50.

[16] He found that eight of the psalms contain language that have their dominant reference in the Asaphite psalms (Pss 50, 73, 74, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81), and nine contain language that is characteristic of the Ephraimite stream of tradition (Pss 50, 74, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 83). For the two psalms that do not appear in these categories (75, 82), Nasuti notes that Psa 75 has a number of probable links and Psa 82, though not containing any Ephraimite links, does not have connections with other definable traditions in the Hebrew Bible, Nasuti, *Tradition History*, 115-116.

[17] Nasuti, *Tradition History*, 60. This term is largely borrowed from the work of Nasuti's *Doktorvater*, Robert R. Wilson . Wilson sees this tradition group as having their origins in the period of the Judges at northern shrines, but eventually becoming part of the priesthood in Jerusalem under Abiathar, an Elide, in the time of David. Once Solomon chose Zadok's line for the high priesthood, Abiathar was forced to Anathoth, and the bearers of the Ephraimite tradition were spread out in the northern kingdom of Israel. These groups later expressed their views in the Elohistic and Deuteronomic sources, as well as the Deuteronomistic school (Jeremiah, parts of Josh-2 Kgs), and the prophet Hosea, cf. Robert R. Wilson, *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 17-18.

[18] Nasuti, *Tradition History*, 157-158. Nasuti uses these form characteristics to posit a function for the Asaphite guild. Sources outside of the Psalms use prophetic language for Asaph (1 Chr 25:1-2 [נבא]; 2 Chr 29:30 [חזה]), which fit well with the prominence of cult prophecies in the collection. In addition, Nasuti claims that communal lament was often followed by a prophetic response (cf. 2 Kgs 19:8-37), a role that the Asaphites appear to have played in Israel's cult (2 Chr 20:13-17).

collection.[19] With respect to the origin of the tradition, he suggests that there is a strong presence of material that is commonly associated with the northern kingdom without making a statement on either a possible time or place of composition. In analyzing these psalms, Nasuti preferred to read them for their contribution to tradition-history in ancient Israel, and chose not to be specific on dating the corpus. Because Nasuti's tradition-historical approach is similar to the one adopted in this thesis, his work will frequently be referenced.

In his monograph on the psalms of Asaph, Goulder takes the rather bold position that these psalms were composed in the north in the decade before the conquest of the Northern kingdom at the hands of Assyria (approx. 732-722).[20] He claimed to have identified these as northern based on the unique names of God in the collection, the dominance of prophetic speech, the focus on history, references to titles for the north, and the similar use of language between the psalms. In particular, Goulder finds the Pentateuchal references to be indicative of the Elohist in the north, and even ascribes to the Asaphite group the responsibility for creating the E source after these psalms were composed.[21] Despite this connection with the Elohist, however, Goulder notes the points of comparison between the Deuteronomist and Pss 78 and 81, but does not connect it with the northern provenance of D. As with the Elohist, he prefers to see the Deuteronomic traditions as dependant on the traditions responsible for the psalms of Asaph.[22] With an origin at the cultic site in Bethel, these psalms eventually found themselves in the possession of the cult singers in Jerusalem, and were then redacted to reflect this new ownership.[23] Despite the novelty and innovation in Goulder's work in this area, his working hypothesis requires an extensive editorial reworking of a group of psalms that seem to be fundamentally focused on issues relating to Jerusalem (Pss 74, 76, 78, 79). This assumption is too far-fetched to work here, as the connections to Jerusalem in this cluster of psalms run deeper than isolated toponyms. For example, among those Jerusalem-focused psalms is a psalm of Zion (76), which has clear ties to

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[19] Nasuti, *Tradition History,* 115-116.

[20] Michael Goulder, *The Psalms of Asaph and the Pentateuch: Studies in the Psalter III*, JSOTSS 233 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996). There is some debate over the exact identity of the Assyrian king who ultimately conquered Samaria, and thus the date in which it happened. See Nadav Na'aman, "The Historical Background to the Conquest of Samaria (720 BCE)," *Biblica* 71 (1990): 206-225.

[21] Goulder, *The Psalms of Asaph*, 328-342.

[22] Goulder, *The Psalms of Asaph*, 34.

[23] Goulder, *The Psalms of Asaph*, 26.

Jerusalemite traditions beyond the opening salvo in praise of Jerusalem and Zion. Also, his ascription of these psalms to the cultic centre at Bethel implies that this site was attacked during the Assyrian invasion, as he interprets the city laments of Pss 74 and 79 to refer to this event. However, this is difficult to corroborate with the historical accounts given by the Assyrians as well as the archaeological data from the site.[24]

A more moderate position is taken by Weber, who holds that these psalms are the product of a northern guild of singers who have relocated to the south following the collapse of the northern kingdom.[25] He argues that this post-722 BCE context best accounts for the heavy presence of northern elements in the collection, and also for the organic inclusion of southern elements (Jerusalem, Zion, David) into the whole.[26] These refugees sought to express their lament in the wake of Assyria's destruction, but also to encourage their fellow Israelites to look to the Davidic dynasty in Jerusalem as the hope for a future reclamation of the northern territory.[27] In this respect, Psa 78 stands as the linchpin for Weber's theory, with its emphasis on the rejection of the north and election of the south, and its central place in the middle of the collection. Because there is reference in the collection to a pre-Josianic plurality of sanctuaries (Psa 74:8), Weber broadly places these psalms in the period between 720 BCE and Josiah's reforms. He even dates Psa 73, a text without much that ties it to either the Asaphite psalms or other definable traditions, to the pre-exilic period based on the presence of the sanctuary.[28] Psalm 79 is notably left out of this pre-exilic collection, as Weber maintains that this psalm about the

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[24] Because the route that the Assyrians would have to take to get to Bethel involved extensive movement in the hill country, they likely did not make the journey to destroy the city. When larger nations moved into the land of ancient Israel, they often would not preoccupy themselves with the cities in the hill country but would be mainly concerned with the cities on the coast along the major highway. The hill country was far more provincial and not as relevant to imperial powers. Jerusalem's siege by Sennacherib is the exception that proves the rule. After capturing the city of Samaria, the campaign of Sargon II continued to the coastal cities of Gezer, Gath, and Gaza ("The Great Summary Inscription," trans. K. Lawson Younger, Jr. [*COS* 2.118E:296-297]), instead of marching through the hills. Recent reevaluations show that the site of Bethel gradually declined after IA IIb, without any clear indications of conquest or destruction by the Assyrians (Israel Finkelstein and Lily Singer-Avitz, "Reevaluating Bethel," *ZDPV* 125 [2009], 33-48).

[25] Beat Weber, "Der Asaph-Psalter: Eine Skizze," in *Prophetie und Psalmen: Festschrift für Klaus Seybold Zum 65. Gerberstag*, eds. Beat Huwyler, Hans P. Mathys, and Beat Weber (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2001), 117-141.

[26] "Die aus einer Gilde stammenden Asaph-Psalmen verbinden nicht nur stoffliche Gemeinsamkeiten, sondern weithin auch eine gemeinsame historische Konstellation … Dies gibt den hinter ihnen stehenden Kreisen auch Gewicht in Jerusalem, wohin sie nach dem Untergang des Nordreichs geflüchtet sind," Weber, "Der Asaph-Psalter," 140.

[27] "Darin mag die Hoffnung mitschwingen, dass Israel unter der Führung Jerusalems verlorenes ephraimitisches Territorium zurückgewinnen kann," Weber, "Der Asaph-Psalter," 129.

[28] Weber, "Der Asaph-Psalter," 132.

destruction of Jerusalem was composed by the Asaphite group and then added to the collection in the exilic period.[29]

When interacting with Weber's treatment of the psalms of Asaph, John Hilber offered a counter explanation for the northern themes in this grouping in that these psalms could have been sponsored by southern royal leadership in order to "re-orient the refugees theologically and politically."[30] It will be argued later in this thesis that this was certainly an effect of these psalms, but it seems more reasonable that northern tradents would be responsible for the transmission and composition of northern traditions, and that the audience of such a text would predominately be northerners, though perhaps there is also room in this process for an interested influence by the southern government. John Hilber's effort is specifically a work on cult prophecy in the Psalms, and he interacts substantially with the prophetic psalms in the Asaphite corpus (50, 75, 81, 82).[31] After comparing these psalms with exemplars of cult prophecy from the Neo-Assyrian empire, he concludes that the prophetic elements were indeed spoken by prophets, and were not post-exilic, sermonic imitations of prophetic style but mostly pre-exilic works.[32] In addition, he notes that these psalms are consistent with the styles and forms of cultic prophecy found in Neo-Assyrian texts, further suggesting, though not determining, a pre-exilic date.[33] His intention was not to establish a specific date for these psalms, but he noted that it is plausible to place their composition between the events of 722 and the end of the exile.[34] His tone remained cautious, and for Psa 82 in particular he could imagine either a pre- or post- exilic date.

1.2.2 Asaph and the *Status Questionis*

With this brief survey of literature, a variety of different questions come to the fore regarding this collection of psalms. The first has to do with unity, as many of these scholars noticed the amount of material that the Asaph psalms share in common with one another, in

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[29] Weber, "Der Asaph-Psalter," 136-138.
[30] Hilber, *Cultic Prophecy in the Psalms*, BZAW 352 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), 142.
[31] John W. Hilber, *Cultic Prophecy*, 128-185.
[32] Hilber, *Cultic Prophecy*, 184.
[33] Among the various parallels, he finds covenant loyalty oaths (SAA 9.3 // Psa 50; 81), instructions for sacrifice with proper inward piety (SAA 9.1.1 i 15-17 // Psa 50:14-15), and similar descriptions of the divine assembly (SAA 9 1.6; 9 9:6-24). For the Assyrian prophecies in translation and transcription, see Simo Parpola and Julian Reade, *Assyrian Prophecies*, SAA 9 (Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1997).
[34] Hilber, *Cultic Prophecy*, 185.

addition to their superscription. What inferences can we make about the social and historical background of the Asaphite group based on these observations? Do the superscriptions really reflect a unified compositional effort, or are they the product of a much later redactor with no bearing on a shared origin? Second, the equivocal presence of a host of northern elements mixed with features from Jerusalem has to be explained, whether by redaction (Goulder), composition (Weber), or tradition-history (Nasuti).[35] It is too simple a solution to dismiss one half of this equation as a later addition (à la Goulder), and a proper solution should seek to account for both elements in the text. Finally, if these psalms do exhibit a close degree of uniformity, what time frame can they be logically placed in? The assumption of an exilic date by early scholarship has been countered with the mostly pre-exilic designation by more modern authors, but Delitzsch's span of over 500 years is far too long. Of the options available, Nasuti's tradition-history approach and Weber's dating scheme are the more reasonable options. As Nasuti has noted, the psalms of Asaph all appear to come from a similar collection of traditions, many of which also seem to be pre-exilic; and, by positing a period of composition for these psalms spanning slightly more than a century, Weber's approach is able to account for the diversity evident in the tradition —especially when compared with the decade proposed by Goulder. Both Nasuti and Weber attempt to hold in tension the presence of northern elements in southern texts without resorting to redaction as the reason for the mixture.

1.3 Methodology

Since the beginning of the modern study of the Hebrew Bible, scholars have invested much of their energy attempting to associate texts with historical circumstances beyond traditional conclusions. This approach has much to commend itself, and this project will make similar assumptions, but there are some significant reservations about the practical applications of this method. Benjamin Sommer takes issue with the dominant approaches of biblical scholarship

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[35] John Day has a hard time attributing some these psalms to northern tradents, because references to the south abound: "Psalm 80 is unlikely to have been actually composed in the north, as some suppose, since it presupposes that Yahweh is enthroned on the cherubim (v. 1), representations of which existed in the Jerusalem temple. But the possibility of some northern background to the Asaphites cannot be ruled out" (John Day, *Psalms*, Old Testament Guides [Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990], 118-119). As with many others who approach these psalms, the mixture between the two is an editorial tangle to unravel, not an aid for the historical-critical endeavour.

when considering the dating of a text, and, though it came in the context of Pentateuchal criticism, his cautions concerning the placement of a given biblical text in an historical setting ought to be restated and heeded. He identifies two commonly employed assumptions, and claims that neither of can produce a meaningful contribution to an historical setting. First, he notes that it is always possible that an author came up with ideas that were particularly relevant at a later time period but were actually produced earlier or later;[36] second, just because a text would be appropriate for a specific moment in history does not mean that it would not be equally appropriate at some other moment.[37] One should allow a text to represent either a creative, and thus early, or conservative, and thus late, literary effort on the part of the author behind the text. That is to say, a biblical author should be allowed the latitude to write something unique for their time, and the document should not be pigeon-holed into one historical setting based solely on the appropriateness of its outlook to a certain audience.

This thesis, therefore, will avoid associating dominant themes in the psalms of Asaph with specific periods of time, like the exile.[38] This is not to deny the application of these ideas for a Judean community in the Babylonian exile, or even in psalms that can otherwise be dated to the exilic period (e.g. Psa 137:8-9), but, as Sommer pleads, the question of date requires more concrete historical connections than its utility for a given community. Jan Joosten and Ronald Hendel have also recently contributed to the topic of dating texts, and, like Sommers, they firmly urge that dates for texts cannot be based on ideas or theologoumena.[39] These approaches tend to

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[36] Benjamin Sommer, "Dating Pentateuchal Texts and the Perils of Pseudo-Historicism," in *The Pentateuch: International Perspectives on Current Research,* eds. Thomas B. Dozeman, Konrad Schmid, and Baruch J. Schwartz (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 85. Frank Moore Cross' proposal that P's theology of attenuated divine presence necessarily stems from the Babylonian exile strikes Sommer as too narrow. Just as in modern religious experience, Israelites did not need the exile to know that God can at times feel distant, as their lament psalms ably testify to. P's theology of כָּבוֹד, or even D's theology of שֵׁם, could have stemmed from any number of social and historical settings (Sommer, "Dating Pentateuchal Texts," 87-91).

[37] For example, Sommer suggests that references to exile in the covenant curses of Lev 26 and Deut 28 do not necessarily have to date from the time of the exile. Exile was a social phenomenon in the Levant from the time of Assyria onwards, and was even present in Hammurapi's law code, and so threats of forced depopulation do not have to be located in the specific event of Babylon's conquest in 586 BCE, (Sommer, "Dating Pentateuchal Texts," 91-94).

[38] Christine Brown Jones, in a condensed version of her PhD dissertation, finds that the two dominant themes in the psalms of Asaph—God's righteous judgment on Israel and the nations, and God's salvation for Israel—would have found a ready audience among the exilic population (Brown Jones, "The Message," 71-86). This may well be, but it does not answer the question of when these psalms came into being, as an existential need for these ideas could be precipitated from any number of crises.

[39] Jan Joosten and Ronald Hendel, *How Old is the Hebrew Bible? A Linguistic, Textual, and Historical Study*, The Anchor Yale Reference Library (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018), 98-101.

have too much flexibility in their application, which often means that scholars can present equally strong cases for widely different proposals. Instead, they argue that the best control for dating a text are connections with what they call "cultural history." Cultural history is defined as the mass of data that ancient authors necessarily communicated, but the presence of which they were largely unaware of. Included in this would be such mundane and even peripheral items such as place names, loanwords, political institutions, foreign affairs, and artistic or literary motifs. Events, names, and concepts paralleled in extra-biblical sources can help corroborate this information to a certain window of time. Like a fish in water, ancient authors would not (usually) realize that they were indicating anything about their circumstances by communicating their message with certain content or form. It is specifically this unawareness that provides the control for dating, as these elements cannot be said to be influenced by an ideological purpose on the part of the author. Historical certitude—that is, naïve positivism—is impossible, especially for as distant a time as the ancient Near East. The more that the historian is able to draw in pieces of evidence from a variety of fields, the more they can approximate the historical location of their subject—a well-warranted theory will have different types of converging evidence. Unfortunately, the evidence from the distant past is partial and incomplete, but a methodology that incorporates a broad range of disciplines is able to effectively mitigate the lack of comprehensive historical data. This study will attempt to prove its thesis by drawing from the fields of geography, archaeology, epigraphy, tradition-history, form criticism, and ancient Near Eastern studies in its endeavour to locate the psalms of Asaph to a particular period. I will admit that none of these arguments will necessarily be convincing as isolated data points, but the cumulative weight of the whole should produce a compelling and cogent theory.

One often overlooked aid to finding a historical situation in the psalms is the presence of northern elements intermixed within southern compositions. That there were political and religious differences between these states is a given, and so the assimilation of northern

psalmody into Judah had to have a precipitating cause.[40] These Israelite elements in Judahite psalms are interesting precisely because of the fact that everything in the Psalter has come to us through Jerusalem's mediation. Some northern texts appear to be included in the Psalms without much Judahite flavouring to them (e.g. Psa 29),[41] while others are indiscernibly northern in their

[40] In his recent monograph on the presence of Israelite texts in Judah's Bible, Daniel Fleming outlines a number of ways in which these two states differed (Fleming, *The Legacy of Israel*, 25-27). First, the city of Jerusalem has an unparalleled role in Judah as the centre for religion and the monarchy. Even before centralization efforts, Jerusalem dominated Judahite self-identity. This is in stark contrast with Israel, where royal capitals (Gibeah, Shechem, Tirzah) are never identified as Israel's principal sacred centres (Bethel, Dan, Gilgal). Second, new claimants to the royal throne in Judah established their legitimacy in connection with David, while rulers in the north could be deposed without recourse to the previous royal house. Fleming suggests there was a fundamental conflict in Israel between royal pretensions and a deep-structure, collaborative political environment. "The people of the land" (עַם־הָאָרֶץ) fulfilled this role to some extent in Judah, but their influence was only seen in Jerusalem, and the collective leadership is not identified with inhabitants of different regions of Judah. Third, the constituent parts of Judah had no social or political definition as peoples with the ability to influence state decisions, whereas in Israel there was a tradition of tribal groups governing the decision making processes of the collective. In sum, Fleming sees the differences between these two as lying primarily between the centralizing, even magnetic, influence of David and Zion with the decentralized role of the monarchy and the cult in the north. His comments are specifically directed towards the politics of each, but religion in the ancient world was not substantially differentiated from the state.

[41] The geographic progression in Psa 29 from the sea through the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon range matches the climatic environment of a storm forming on the coast of northern Israel, then travelling through the Galilee on its way to the desert around Damascus. As will be discussed later, geographic references are rhetorical effectively mainly for those who are familiar with the image. Because the narrative of the psalm is firmly located in the north, it likely originated within a northern community. This text is also one of the most explicit equations of storm god imagery with Yahweh in the Psalter, with language largely drawn from older, West Semitic material (see Dahood, *Psalms I*, AB 16 [Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966], 175-180). When storms hit the coast of Israel from the northwest, they are first visible from the soaring promontory of Mt. Carmel (1 Kgs 18:42-45). The northern charismatic prophets fought against the equation of Baal and Yahweh, especially at this location (cf. 1 Kgs 18), and Peter Craigie argues that this psalm is structured as a polemical victory hymn against the Canaanites and their worship of Baal (Peter Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, WBC 19, Revised Edition [Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2004], 243-246). How this psalm ended up in Jerusalem's Psalter is unclear, but the process must have been similar to other ancient northern poetry, like the Song of Deborah (Jud 5).

present state, as they have undergone a drastic alteration (e.g. Psa 20).[42] The social background to each of these processes is worthy of a discussion in itself, but the concern with this project is specifically the confluence of the two tradition streams into a single psalm, or collection of psalms, and the consequent implications for the dating of these texts. Isolated Judahite or Israelite features can be evaluated for their relative historical dating on other terms, but an intentional combination of these two traditions narrows the range of dates available.

To this end, significant amount of time will be spent in this thesis outlining the northern origin of the Asaphite psalms, and using that information to proffer a range of dates for their composition and origin. Although a number of scholars have already proposed a northern origin for the psalms of Asaph, it is in the interest of this thesis to collect and present data from a variety of fields that would support that idea, and then provide historical contexts for those psalms. It is too common in the study of the Psalms that the entire history or geographic provenance of a given psalm hinges on one or two minute features of a text (i.e. the tribal name Joseph in Psa 80:2). A convincing proposal for a northern origin of any psalm will not come from isolated and singular references within the psalm, but will be evident from a range of data collected from a variety of methods. The intent of this study is to outline the particular northern character of the psalms of Asaph, and then to posit and demonstrate a historical circumstance when such a transference from north to south might have occurred. In doing so, this project will

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[42] Recent evidence from an Aramaic text in Papyrus Amherst 63 (column xi or xii:19-20) suggests a northern origin for Psa 20. This is a royal psalm, a liturgy for the Davidic king going to battle (Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 1-59*, 279), and it has no history of interpretation suggesting a northern provenance. However, the text of the papyrus is likely a fellow daughter tradition, along with Psa 20, to an original composition from the northern site of Bethel. The text from the papyrus is in all probability northern because it conflates the terms "our bull" and "Bethel" as names for Yahweh, and it uses the northern orthography *yhw* for Yahweh. Karel Van der Toorn believes that the Hebrew text behind the Aramaic is what Psa 20 drew on when composing based on a number of arguments (Karel Van der Toorn, "Three Extrabiblical Psalms from Papyrus Amherst 63," *JBL* 136 [2017]: 636-637, 649). First, the Aramaic text is more brief than Psa 20, lacking equivalents for vss 4, 6a, 7, 9 and 10a, which would suggest that the shorter text is earlier. Second, some of the portions that are absent in the Aramaic text but present in the psalm deal with the Davidic king (20:7, 9-10). Third, the differences appear to be theologically motivated, with Zion simply substituting Zaphon, and the addition of "name theology" in 20:8b ("but we trust in the name of Yahweh our God," cp. P.Amh xii:17 "But as to us—the Lord is our God, Yaho!"). Fourth, the Aramaic text is a liturgy for a specific moment ("May Bethel answer us tomorrow" xii:17-18), whereas the psalm has become a generalized prayer ("May he answer us whenever we call" 20:10). The point of the matter is that this northern text was transformed by southern liturgists without any intention of retaining its northern character—a significantly different approach than that taken with the psalms of Asaph. Kraus tentatively suggests that the date for this psalm should be late pre-exilic, given the predominance of the name theology, but a precise date is difficult to imagine (Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 1-59*, 279). For a translation slightly different than van der Toorn's, see "The Aramaic Text in Demotic Script," trans. Richard C. Steiner (COS 1.99:309-327).

contribute to the broader discussion concerning the historical value of the Psalms by examining the interaction between Israel and Judah in the psalms of Asaph.

Chapter 2: The Geographic Provenance of the Psalms of Asaph

2.1 Introduction

As stated earlier, when examining the northern origin of certain psalms within the Psalter, it is important to demonstrate provenance through a number of different methods. Because these psalms are not explicit about the communities from which they came, it is up to the interpreter to posit such connections. In order to be convincing, a proposal on provenance requires a number of converging lines of evidence from a number of different methods. Individual points in the following chapter may have various degrees of strength, but their convergence can establish the relative strength of the theory.

First I need to demonstrate that I am comparing apples with apples when approaching the psalms of Asaph, so I will look at two important questions: how should we treat the superscription "of Asaph" (לְאָסָף), and can we treat the psalms of Asaph as a group? If these psalms cannot be analyzed as a whole, or if the superscription is an artificial addition from a much later date, determining the origins of the collection would be a much more difficult task. Should a group of psalms marked by a common personal superscription be read as a compositional unity or should these superscriptions be seen as later editorial editions by a post-exilic guild of temple singers? Second, using various methods, and drawing from both primary and secondary sources, I will demonstrate not only the various strands of northern material, but also the confusing presence of southern features as well. Data from fields that are often drawn from when determining a northern psalm—language, geography, and tradition history—will be used to evaluate the provenance of the psalms.

It must be stated that the data culled from these sources are able to provide me with information on the geographic provenance, but not the precise historical location. In fact, this section is not intended to ask the question of "when," but "who." Employing the following methods will be able to explain who were the individuals responsible for the theological definition and subsequent transmission of the present collection, but will not provide an answer to the specific date of composition.[1] However, a significant conclusion that will emerge from this

[1] Nasuti, *Tradition History*, 97.

study is the equivocal mixture of northern and southern features in the psalms of Asaph; this combination, in turn, limits the number of historical locations where it would be appropriate for Israel's literature to move into that of Judah.

2.2 Superscriptions

2.2.1 David and History

At first glance, what appears to unite this collection of psalms is their common superscription "of Asaph" (לְאָסָף). Such titles are common throughout the psalms, but an interpretive conclusive has yet to be reached about the exact nature of the use of this preposition in titles with personal names.[2] Earlier commentators assumed that the *lamed* preposition indicated authorship and that the words of the respective psalms were penned by that author, but most modern commentators have now abandoned this position. In his commentary, Craigie outlines the various ways in which the *lamed* preposition with a personal name could have been used in the superscriptions: "for" (advantage), "by" (authorship), "to" (dedicated to), "concerning" (in reference to), or "for the use of".[3] An intriguing parallel to this phenomenon in the Psalms comes from the superscriptions found at the beginning of the three main Ugaritic mythic texts (Baal, Aqhat, and Kirtu), where the preposition *l* precedes the name of the main character of the texts (*lb'l, l'qht*, and *lkrt*), but does not in any way indicate authorship. Whether or not any given psalm was actually penned by the person in the superscription, some modern commentators agree that the ancient editors of the Psalter employed the titles and intended to communicate authorship.[4] Others suggest that "dedicated to," "in reference to," or even

[2] There are various personal names that appear in the book of Psalms. David is the most frequent, appearing 75 times in the MT, and an additional 13 times in the Septuagint; Asaph is the next most frequent, with 12 occasions (50, 73-83); the sons of Korah have 11 (43-49, 83-85, 87-88); Solomon has two (72, 127), Moses has one (90); Heman the Ezrahite has one (88); Ethan the Ezrahite has one (89); and Jeduthun has 3, though each of these overlaps with other names (39, 62, 77).

[3] Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 33-34.

[4] Kraus, *Psalms 1-59*, 23; Weiser, *Psalms: A Commentary*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), 94-95.

"about" (like the Ugaritic examples) would be better options, especially in connection with a royal-liturgical function of the Psalms superscribed with לְדָוִד.[5]

Throughout the Psalms, David emerges as the most common personal name to appear with the preposition, and, as such, functions as a *crux interpretum* for the issue: are these notations indications of authorship, or something else entirely? Mowinckel has a plausible suggestion that would unite these two approaches with respect to the Davidic superscriptions.[6] First, the title לְדָוִד was used to indicate the function of a psalm within a royal cult setting ("for/about/concerning the Davidic king"). Second, later editors of the psalter misunderstood this reference and began applying the same term to various psalms to indicate authorial origin in their quest to portray David as an ideal worshipper,[7] and to authorize psalmody under the authority of David in the post-exilic period.[8] That many of the references to David were continually added is clear from the abundance of the term in portions of the Psalter believed to come from the post-exilic period (e.g. Pss 133; 137 [LXX]; 139; 145), as well as the discrepancies between the MT, the LXX, and Qumran.[9]

The historical information found in prefaces to select psalms is another matter entirely. Any reference to David's life which serves as a compositional setting for the psalm speaks more to the later reception of the psalter and the prominence given to David in its creation than to a natural historical context.[10] For all of the psalms that have this sort of preceding comment, the context

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[5] "In spite of problems of detail, [the Davidic superscriptions] can reasonably be taken as an indication of the large place which royal psalmody has in the collection" John H. Eaton, *Kingship and the Psalms,* Studies in Biblical Theology Second Series 32 (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1976). See also Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, trans. D.R. Thomas (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), 98-101.

[6] Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 98-101.

[7] Cf. Craig Broyles, *Psalms*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 4-7. Mowinckel's comments on this are notable: "The 'David' of the headings was not originally meant to indicate the name of the author, but refers to the cultic use of the psalms in the king's Temple, then is was later understood, however, to indicate the author, and by mistake was added to many psalms which cannot be so old," Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 98.

[8] Susan Gillingham, "The Levites and the Editorial Composition of the Psalms," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Psalms*, ed. William P. Brown (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 205. Just as the priesthood in the exilic period was connected to Aaron and sought to bolster their current situation by appealing to dominant figures of the past (Moses), so the Levites appealed to David in their efforts to legitimize their authority. This motive appears clearly surfaces in 1 Chronicles 15-16, where David institutes Levitical worship, as well as gives the inaugural hymn for worship on the Temple Mount.

[9] The Septuagint has 13 more psalms with superscriptions to David, all of which are in Books IV-V (33, 43, 71, 91, 93-99, 104, 137). Qumran has four additional ascriptions to David (33 [4Q98 1:2], 99 [4Q92 2:3], 104 [11Q5 fEi:6], 133 [11Q5 23:7]), and one famous colophon (11Q5 27:2-11), which claims that David composed 4,050 musical pieces.

[10] As argued cogently by Brevard Childs, "Psalm Titles and Midrashic Exegesis," *JSS* 16 (1971): 137-150.

often has little connection to the historical note, and the *Sitz im Leben* of the psalm is more appropriately found in Israel's worship, not in David's supposed prayer book.[11] Nevertheless, the close connection between the phrase לְדָוִד and the following historical information in Pss 3, 7?, 18, 34, 51, 52, 54, 56, 57, 59, 60, 63, and 142 make it difficult to separate the *lamed* from notions of authorship,[12] however imagined they are by a later editor.[13] It appears that these historical superscriptions were added in the post-exilic period as an interpretive move to define David as an ideal psalmist and worshipper.

When commentators on the psalms discuss the *lamed* preposition, often their focus of discussion is on the name that occurs the most in such a construction: David. However, it seems that the various names that are used in the psalms can be split into two categories. First, there are the names of Israel's great heroes from the past, variously representing the paradigmatic king/ patron of psalmody (David), temple builder (Solomon), and law-giver/prophet (Moses). The second group consists of an assortment of Levitical figures that are known mainly from the post-exilic works of Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles (Asaph, Korah, Heman, Ethan, Jeduthun). While the former category may not have had an active role in the formulation of psalmody for Israel's religious institutions, the latter category certainly must have. These two categories, therefore, need to be weighed differently. The prominent figures in Israel's past play a role in how the psalms were received by later generations, reflect how the psalms were canonically structured and interpreted,[14] and, in the case of David, represent a creative effort to portray him as a model

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[11] See Childs, "Psalm Titles," 143-148 for some observations on the rationale behind the historical notes and the content of the psalms.

[12] GKC §129c.

[13] Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 1-59*, 22. Some poetic texts outside of the psalter contain references to a particular situation in their composition (David, 2 Sam 1:17; 22:1; Hezekiah, Isa 38:9), but, with the exception of 2 Sam 22 (=Psa 18), these poems are conspicuous in their reference to historical context gained from the narrative. In the examples from the psalms, the historical notes appear to have been added on to previously songs of individual and communal worship.

[14] Gerald Wilson's description of Moses' function at the beginning of Book IV (Psa 90) is convincing, "Shaping the Psalter: A Consideration of Editorial Linkage in the Book of Psalms," in *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter,* ed. J. Clinton McCann, JSOTSS 159 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 75-76. As Book III ends with a communal lament concerning the seeming end of the Davidic covenant, the reference to Moses at the beginning of Book IV brings the reader back to the desert, to the time before Israel had a king. In contrast to the transitory nature of man, God's wisdom and work is eternal (90:3-4), and he is able to work in the world without a king. The addition of the name cannot, then, be an indicator of authorship, but of a reading strategy in the canonical psalter. The two references to Solomon appear to be influenced by the context of the psalm. Reference in a royal psalm (Psa 72) of gold brought from Sheba for the king has parallels with material from 1 Kings (10:1-13), and reference to Yahweh building a house in Psa 127 may be thought of as a reference to the temple building activity of Solomon.

for both prayer and worship—none of which are necessarily indications of authorship.[15] On the other hand, the Levitical groups and temple singers had a more active role in the composition and performance of such texts, and so their association with particular psalms should not be so quickly dismissed.

2.2.2 Asaph and Superscriptions

It seems that many of the references to David can be dismissed as historically dubious, but if Levitical guilds,[16] such as that of Asaph, have stronger connections to the composition of this liturgical literature, it would be reasonable to associate their superscriptions as attributes of origin. Interestingly, Kraus denies any compositional or historical significance to all of the psalm titles—including both Davidic and Levitical groups—but yet contends that the priests and temple singers were responsible for most of the composition and transmission of the psalms.[17] Perhaps these Levitical groups of singers should be given more credence when they appear in

[15] cf. Broyles, *Psalms*, 6, 29-31. In the textual history of the psalms, the amount of psalms that are attributed to David grew, as already mentioned. These different textual witnesses display snapshots of an increasing tendency in the Second Temple Period to portray David as the ideal worshipper. For more on the significance of the Davidic portrait for understanding the editorial effort in the Psalms, see Brevard Childs, "Midrashic Exegesis."

[16] The word "guild" will be used throughout this thesis to refer to the Asaphite group of Levites. Drawing from the cognate Akkadian adjective *lē'û* ("able, capable, competent"; CAD 9.151-153), which is often applied to craftsmen, physicians, or diviners, Bernhard Lang suggests that Israelite *ləwiyyim* were likewise specialists, though in the fields of religious ritual and knowledge, "New Light on the Levites: The Biblical Group that Invented Belief in Life after Death in Heaven," in *What Is Human? Theological Encounters with Anthropology,* ed. Eve-Marie Becker et al (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017), 68. Given that their title is a genealogical one, the skills developed and maintained within this group would be passed on to descendants, just as other guilds would have done. For evidence on the prevalence of trade guilds in the late pre-exilic period, see Isaac, Mendelsohn, "Guilds in Ancient Palestine," *BASOR* 80 (1940): 17-21 for the dying industry at Tell Beit-Mirsim, and Trude Dothan and Seymour Gitin, "Tell Miqne (Ekron)," in *New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land, Volume 3*. ed. Ephraim Stern (Jerusalem: Carta, 1993), 1051-1059 for the olive oil industry at Ekron.

[17] Kraus, *Psalms 1-59*, 65-68.

superscriptions to the Psalms. When the book of Psalms attributes a liturgical piece to a particular Levitical guild, we should reckon that psalm as originating in a Levitical context.[18]

Although a vast majority of the references to the Levitical cult singers Heman, Ethan, Korah, and Asaph are found in distinctively post-exilic material (Chronicles, Ezra-Nehemiah), there is good reason to locate at least some of the guilds in pre-exilic times. Nahum Sarna has suggested three lines of evidence that suggest a pre-exilic location for the guilds, rather than a purely post-exilic one, which constitute the first three points that follow.[19] First, references to these groups are only present in Books II-III of the psalms, and are entirely absent from Books IV-V. These last two books have a much higher concentration of exilic and post-exilic psalms (eg., Psa 135-137) than the previous three, and they also reached a final editorial state at a much later date than Books I-III.[20] If the Levitical superscriptions were used by these post-exilic groups, one would expect to see more representation in the later books. Second, no textual witnesses embellish the evidence for Levitical groups in the superscriptions, as is the case in the Septuagint and Qumran with the figure of David, so their presence in the psalms lies in an early stage of the transmission of the text. Third, though references to the musical guilds abound across the psalter, it is interesting that references to musical instruments are only found in the

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[18] This is not to say that all of the psalms under the title "Asaph" or "Sons of Korah" stem from the same time period. Both of them were active in the post-exilic period, as evidenced by the genealogies (1 Chr 6:31-48) and reinterpretations (1 Chr 16:7-36) of the Chronicler, as well as the list of returnees from Babylon (Ezra 2:41). There is some evidence for groups of professional singers in the pre-exilic period. Prophets sometimes used music as a medium for their message (1 Sam 10:5; 2 Kgs 3:15), Amos refers to songs employed in the context of worship, probably at the sanctuary at Bethel (Amos 5:23), and in Sennacherib's annals there are indications of professional male and female musicians in Judah, as Hezekiah gives them to the Assyrian king as tribute (COS 2.119B:303). An inscribed potsherd from Arad, found near the IA II temple, lists the בני קרח as recipients in a distribution list (Arad 49:2), Yohanan Aharoni, "Arad: Its Temple and Inscriptions," *BA* 31 (1968): 11. One other group of individuals mentioned in the same ostracon, the sons of Bāṣāl (Arad 49:1), are likely the same group as the בְּנֵי־בַצָּלוּת returning from exile (Ezra 2:52=Neh 7:54), who are listed among the נְתוּנִים ("assigned ones") for service in the temple. In other cases in the Hebrew Bible, *ben* in construct with a noun indicating occupation signifies a guild (Amos 7:14, בֶּן־נָבִיא; HALOT 138), and the personal names of eponymous founders (Asaph, Korah) could indicate specific groups within those guilds. One bulla from Lachish belonged to a certain Jeremiah, who was the "son of Zephaniah, son of נבי," which indicates genealogical descent and profession, and likely indicates his role as a prophet (Seal 530), Naḥman Avigad, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp* Seals, revised and completed by Benjamin Sass (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1997), 207. Though the evidence from Arad is circumstantial, the presence of other priestly families known from the Jerusalem temple (Pashur, Arad 54:1; Meremoth, Arad 50:1) indicates some connection between the cultic organization of the two sites. It is hard to imagine that the singers in the pre-exilic temple did not organize themselves into guilds, just as their descendants in the post-exilic period did.

[19] Nahum Sarna, "The Psalms Superscriptions and the Guilds," in *Studies in Biblical Interpretation,* JPS Scholars of Distinction Series (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2000), 335-336.

[20] cf. Gerald Wilson, "A First Century C.E. Date for the Closing of the Book of Psalms?" *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 28 (2000): 102-110; and Peter Flint, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls and the Book of Psalms*, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 17, (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 135-149.

first three books of the Psalter, and none in the later two. The choirmaster (מְנַצֵּחַ) appears 51 times in Books I-III, but only twice (Pss 139, 140) in Books IV-V. Finally, the Chronicler puts a much heavier emphasis on the figure of Heman among the Levitical singers than the book of Psalms does. In Chronicles, he is listed first among his peers (1 Chr 15:17, 19), is a grandson of Samuel (1 Chr 6:18), and has a full 21 generations back to Levi (1 Chr 6:18-23). However, in the Psalms his name appears only once (Psa 88) in what appears to be a later addition to a psalm of the sons of Korah. When Heman's position in the Psalter is compared with that of the Korahites, who ran afoul with the Aaronites in the post-exilic period (Num 16; 27) and are only mentioned passingly in the Chronicler's genealogy (1 Chr 6:22; 9:19), there is a striking reversal of expectations for Korah given their prominence in the psalms and their situation in Chronicles and P.[21] Perhaps the social context of the Korah psalms lies prior to these efforts by the priestly author. Even the prominence of the Asaph guild is completely ignored in P's Levitical genealogies (Exo 6:14-25; Num 26:58). In sum, the points of evidence for the origins of Levitical superscriptions are at best equivocal between the Chronicler, P, and the Psalms, and indicate that there may yet be a plausible origin for Asaph in the pre-exilic period. The predominance of the Asaphite guild in post-exilic material does not require that the references to that group in the Psalms should be placed after the construction of the second temple.

Jonker argues that the Levitical names attached to various psalms reflects a propagandistic effort by Levitical groups in the Second Temple Period.[22] Despite this claim, he also would attribute the Asaphite and Korahite collections to northern tradents and would date the origin of these collections to the pre-exilic period.[23] He also maintains that the respective collections of Asaph and Korah were collected as distinct entities, and that they originated among particular Levitical groups. During the Second Temple Period, these collections of previously northern

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[21] The Korahites in some cases appear to be connected with designations from the post-exilic period. They are designated as "keepers of the threshold" (שֹׁמְרֵי הַסִּפִּים) in 1 Chr 9:19 (cf. 1 Chr 9:19; 26:1, 19) which provides a possible connection with the later half of their psalms (84-85, 87-88). In Psa 84, the psalmist would rather "man the threshold" (הִסְתּוֹפֵף; Psa 84:11) than be associated with the wicked. Likewise, Psa 87 seems to come from the perspective of somebody accounting for the people who are entering into the temple complex through the gates from a variety of nations, which would be most appropriate in a post-exilic setting. However, many of the earlier psalms of Korah (42-49) are clearly pre-exilic: a wedding song for an Israelite king and Tyrian princess (45), psalms of Zion's inviolability (46, 48), and an enthronement hymn to Yahweh (47).

[22] Jonker, Louis C, "Revisiting the Psalm Headings: Second Temple Levitical Propaganda?" in *Psalms and Liturgy*, ed. Dirk J. Human, (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 102-122.

[23] Jonker, "Revisiting the Psalm Headings," 109.

psalms were attributed to then-current guild leaders who could then legitimize these northern texts. Jonker contends that, even if the editor put the name of Asaph on this group of psalms, there is still good evidence to suggest that these psalms were already considered a collection.[24] He is certainly correct that the development of Levitical groups in the Second Temple Period, as reflected in Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles, was complicated,[25] and that there is a basic unity to the Asaphite psalms, but his thesis does not explain why northern psalms would continue to be transmitted in southern circles for a number of centuries without first being legitimated and incorporated into the southern corpus of psalms. It may be better to attribute the psalms to a northern Asaphite guild that later rose to prominence in the exilic and post-exilic period.

If there is no connection between the psalms of Asaph based on their common superscription, then the interpreter is forced to explain why this particular group of psalms maintains this seemingly superficial connection. It may be the case that a group of disparate psalms from different sources and times were reorganized by an editor into an Asaphite collection, presumably by a post-exilic member of that guild.[26] It may also be, following Jonker, that these psalms were a recognizable collection before an Asaphite guild member supposedly inserted the superscription. That the Asaphite group was a recognized guild of singers returning from the Exile (Ezra 2:41)—and, in fact, the only guild of singers mentioned in Ezra—puts the burden of proof on those who would claim that the superscription does not have pre-exilic origins. It could be argued that the Asaphites in the period of the Chronicler were responsible for the editing of this group of Psalms and anachronistically inserting their guild name. If this is the case, it is interesting that the longest extant psalm attributed to the Asaphites in Chronicles (1

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[24] Jonker, "Revisiting the Psalm Headings," 111.

[25] The common formulation of the development of Levitical guilds, first outlined by Hartmut Gese, is that 1) after the exile, the Levitical singers were simply called "sons of Asaph" but were not considered Levites (Ezra 2:41 = Neh 7:44); 2) by the time of Nehemiah, the singers were reckoned as Levites and divided into two groups, the sons of Asaph and the sons of Jeduthun (cf. Neh 11:3-19; 1 Chr 9:1-18); 3a) the Levitical singers split into three groups, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun (cf. 1 Chr 16:37-42; 2 Chr 5:12; 29:13-14; 35:15); and 3b) three groups remain, but Ethan is replaced by Jeduthun and Heman is more prominent than Asaph (cf. 1 Chr 6:31-48; 15:16-21). This synthesis of Gese's work is from Yonker, "Revisiting the Psalm Headings," 107-108. Such a hypothetical development takes the silence in Kings and Samuel on Levitical guilds to mean that these levites had no primary role, and that they were not manifest in different groups before the exile. In Gese's theory, Chronicles is the primary source of material on the Levitical superscriptions, not Psalms. Because many of the psalms that have superscriptions are pre-exilic, it may be best to treat the different groups as pre-exilic as well.

[26] Nasuti sees this process as unlikely, as Asaph is a rather peripheral character in biblical literature compared to an individual like David (Nasuti, "Tradition History," 56).

Chr 16) does not reference any of the "canonical" psalms of Asaph (50, 73-83), nor are the dominant themes of the Asaphite psalms present in the Chronicler's psalm. Instead, the Chronicler quotes from Pss 96:1-13; 105;1-15; 106:1, 47-48; and 136:1. The formal category that these psalms take (hymn) are largely foreign to the main Asaphite collection. In their selection of psalms, there is a preponderance of communal laments (74, 79, 80, 83), prophetic oracles (50, 75, 81, 82), but only one hymn (76).[27] Compared to the positive overtures of the hymn in 1 Chr 16, the psalms of Asaph are much more dour. Nasuti suggests that 1 Chr 16 reflects the type of worship performed by Asaph during the time of the Chronicler, and that the "canonical" Asaphite collection stemmed from a different time.[28]

It is certainly difficult to be dogmatic about the dates of individual psalms. However, if we can assume that the psalms of Asaph are connected on the basis of their origin in the same liturgical guild, perhaps the collective weight of evidence from each of the individual psalms can contribute to our understanding of the collection as a whole. Once this external control is established, one can then examine the psalms within the corpus as different voices of the same tradition group. They may not all come from the same generation of liturgists, nor does this imply that the figure of Asaph was responsible for their genesis or development, but it cannot be denied that they share a special connection from their superscription. As a group of cultic singers, one could conceivably place them at any time in Israel's history. However, if either northern or southern provenance could be set on this group, it would greatly aid in any quest to determine their date and historical context.

2.3 Thematic Unity

Psalmists never set out to record history, and scholars are fortunate when even only a handful of historical allusions emerge from a particular psalm. Despite these difficulties, the

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[27] The psalms that the Chronicler draws from when crafting this psalm are from a small group of psalms that make explicit reference to the exodus in public worship. At first glance, this appears to have clear parallels with the psalms of Asaph (esp. 77, 78, 80, 81), but Susan Gillingham notes a difference in function between the exodus-themed Asaphite psalms and others in the Psalter (e.g. 105, 106, 135, 136). She contends that the former group employs the exodus tradition as a way to lend political legitimacy to the Davidic throne, while the later use the exodus as a parallel of their return from exile in Babylon (Susan Gillingham, "The Exodus Tradition and Israelite Psalmody," *SJT* 52 [1999]: 39-44).

[28] Nasuti, "Tradition History," 190.

challenging task of finding and sorting through these references could be alleviated if a psalm could be examined within the context of a discernible collection of psalms. When a collection is treated as a product of a homogenous group of tradents, each psalm is able to contribute in part to the historical analysis of the whole. Two recent attempts at determining a historic location for certain psalms, by Broyles and Day, have used traditions and themes represented across the Psalter as their basis for providing a general dating of particular psalms.[29] They correctly noted that patterns across a group of psalms, rather than discrete references within individual psalms, should provide the data set for dating groups of psalms to different periods. Like the traditions they identify (e.g., Zion, Ark, Royal), certain collections in the psalms, such as that of Asaph, display a measure of unity across the corpus, from which an argument for dating the collective can be made.[30]

The unity of the Asaphite collection has been argued in different ways. Goulder essentially argued for an authorial unity, and claimed that they all stemmed from one cultic group in a specific decade. The elements of these psalms that did not fit with his reconstructed history were ascribed to a later redactor which, as noted above, is an interpretation that requires too creative of an exegesis to be a reliable option.[31] Despite this, a number of Goulder's observations are helpful in the study of the Asaphite collection: (1) when looking at the names for God, he found that a quarter of the instances of אֵל in the Psalter occur in the psalms of Asaph (19/77), and that the divine name עֶלְיוֹן appears eight times in this collection, but only 22 in the entire book of Psalms;[32] (2) Asaph has a more focused concern on Israel's past as preserved in their traditions

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[29] Both of them categorize the following as pre-exilic traditions: royal psalms, the songs of Zion, psalms alluding to the cherub ark (including the psalms of Yhwh's kingship), and corporate laments alluding to an army (Broyles, "Memories, Myths," 27-28; Day, "How Many Pre-Exilic Psalms?" 225-237).

[30] Other cases for dating intra-Psalms collections are possible the Hallel Psalms (Pss 113-118), the concluding doxology (Pss 146-150), the songs of Ascents (Pss 121-134), and even the *miktam* psalms (Pss 16; 56-60; cf. Psa 75). As with Asaph, these do not need an identical author, historical situation, form category, or *Sitz im Leben* in order to be placed within the same social environment. What unites them is a similar theme throughout *and* consecutive placement in final book of Psalms.

[31] Goulder claims that redactors are often more prolific at the beginning of an editorial unit than the end, (Goulder, *The Psalms of Asaph*, 26). He then compares the heavier presence of references to Joseph in Pss 77, 78, 80, 81 with the references to Jerusalem in the earlier chapters Pss 50, 74, 76, 78, 79. This explanation seems to work, but the references to Judah and Jerusalem appear to be far too much a part of the collection's integrity to be a later insertion.

[32] In his commentary on the Psalms, Mitchell Dahood notes a number of cases where the preposition עַל could be read as a shortened form of this divine name (Pss 7:9, 11; 18:42; 32:5; 62:8; 68:30, 35 (?); 139:14; 141:3; 146:5), none of which are in the psalms of Asaph. For a discussion see Dahood *Psalms I*, 45, 117.

than does the rest of the Psalter; (3) northern tribal figures frequently appear; and (4) the collection shows a common use of imagery, for example, in the use of shepherds and flocks (74:1; 77:21; 78:52; 78:70-72; 79:13; 80:2). Connections such as these suggest a commonality among these psalms that extends past the title. Psalm groups evident throughout the book (i.e. the Elohistic Psalter, Songs of Ascents, etc.) are often not collected according to modern genre classification and contain a variety of formal designations. In light of this, Goulder correctly states that an ancient collection of psalms from a given cultic group does not require an agreement in genre in order to be considered a unified collection within the Psalter.[33] A collection of psalms could be tied by a common tradition source, and not necessarily a common genre.

In his short introduction to the book of Psalms, John Day puts forward many of the same arguments for unity within the Asaphite psalms as Goulder, such as the appeal to history and shepherd imagery.[34] To these, Day also notes that (1) Yahweh's judgment looms throughout the collection, whether directed to Israel (50; 77; 78; 80; 81), Jerusalem (74; 79), the foreign nations (75; 76; 83), wicked individuals (73), or the gods themselves (82); (2) this group has an above average amount of divine oracles embedded within psalms (50, 75, 81, 82); (3) the collection has a strong collective focus, with many of the psalms performed or directed to a community—especially in contrast to the individualistic David psalters. Day further divides the references to the past in these psalms according to the exodus (77:12-21; 78:11-53; 80:9; 81:6-8), the conquest and settlement (78:53-54; 80:10-12), the judges period (78:56-66; 83:10-13), and even Yahweh's primeval conquest over chaos (74:12-17). Due to the brevity of his work, Day does not further elaborate on the relationship between these psalms, or their provenance, but he maintains that these psalms were a separate collection before their incorporation into the Psalter.

Nasuti, in a more cautious manner than Goulder, sees the psalms of Asaph as representative of a tradition which was able to manifest itself in each psalm at different periods of that tradition's existence.[35] This tradition did not need be restricted to a particular epoch of Israel's history, but was allowed to reflect its various stages of development and application in different psalms. In such manner, differing perspectives were allowed to emerge from these psalms at

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[33] Goulder, *The Psalms of Asaph*, 22.
[34] John Day, *Psalms*, Old Testament Guides (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 117-119.
[35] Nasuti, *Tradition History*, 57.

various points in history. Nasuti does not go so far as to say that this tradition was to be identified with a specific group of temple singers or even a specific time frame, but simply ascribes it to a tradition group associated heavily with the northern kingdom. In principle, this ought to be preferred to Goulder's specificity because it enables the group of psalms to have a more fluid period of composition. He does not give a specific date range for this collection, but he supposes that the Ephraimite tradition that he discusses extends from the pre-exilic era down through the exilic. Despite this generous range, the continuation of his Ephraimite tradition any further than the 6th c. BCE is difficult to imagine. Would those tradents from the northern kingdom continue to preserve their distinctions within Judah beyond the Babylonian exile and return, and then incorporate their hymns into the Judahite Psalter? If they truly reflect this Ephraimite tradition, it would fit best to place them before or during the exile, and the temporal situation would have to reflect a period of integration between north and south.

Christine Brown Jones, in a recent article distilling some of the more salient points of her dissertation on the psalms of Asaph, puts forward a literary argument for the unity of the collection.[36] She notes that the psalms of Asaph display a surprising amount of thematic unity, especially in their use of divine names, their concern for history, and frequent allusion to judgment.[37] On this last point she has much to say, and goes so far as to say that God's righteous judgment—on both Israel and the nations—constitutes Asaph's major doctrine of God.[38] She distances herself, and rightly so, from claiming that all of these psalms were written at the same time, or that they were all composed by the same person. Her reasons for doing so are in line with recent approaches to the book of Psalms that highlight the canonical and literary nature of the book, while paying less attention to the implications of a form-, redaction-, or historical-critical method.[39] For example, though she admits that the psalms of Asaph display a measure of

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[36] Christine Brown Jones, "The Message of the Asaphite Collection and Its Role in the Psalter," in *The Shape and Shaping of the Book of Psalms: The Current State of Scholarship*, ed. Nancy L. deClaissé-Walford (Atlanta: SBL Press), 71-86.

[37] Brown Jones, "The Message," 72.

[38] Brown Jones, "The Message," 73-77.

[39] "One important aspect of my research was to understand the impact of linguistic and thematic links and arrangement upon the reader. By reader, I assume a knowledgeable, careful reader of the text who lived during or shortly after the exile and was deeply influenced by and concerned about the fate of Judah. Communication occurs in the interaction between text and reader, and thus a major question for me is, 'What message is being communicated?'" (Brown Jones, "The Message," 72-73).

unity, Brown Jones asserts that the psalms were only grouped "in a way that displays unity",[40] but did not necessarily come from the same circle of tradition; and, despite the fact that she was hesitant to find a specific historical locale for these texts, she assigns the purported reader to the exilic period. When faced with the amount of data that unites these psalms, and that most of their connections are rare in the Psalter, it seems most logical to assume that they came from the same circle of tradents. The scenario that Brown-Jones proposes, wherein psalms were composed that had similar themes, but were not related, and then later collected into a group, does not make the best sense of the situation. These psalms display a literary homogeneity likely because they, in all likelihood, come from a similar source.

In sum, there is a particular cluster of themes that run throughout the Asaphite collection that would suggest an origin among a social group distinct from those responsible for other psalms. Some of these themes were alluded to in the preceding review of literature, and more will be developed further in this study. The thematic variations are significant enough that they indicate different settings for different psalms, but the threads that connect each of the psalms stand out as significant. Further discussions in this chapter will examine what sort of parallels exist between the traditions, themes, and references in the psalms of Asaph with other texts from ancient Israel, but this examination will happen under the assumption that the psalms exhibit an essential unity of source. Because of this unity, it is profitable, and even necessary, to study these psalms as a distinct group, with each one contributing to the understanding of the whole.

2.4 Linguistic Evidence

One prominent voice who argues for the inclusion of the psalms of Asaph into a northern sphere of composition is Gary Rendsburg, who argues the case on linguistic evidence. Much of Rendsburg's work has focused on proving the existence of a northern dialect distinct from that of the southern kingdom. He builds his methodology on Hurivitz's diachronic analysis of the Hebrew language and lists four criteria by which to determine a northern dialectal feature: distribution, extra-biblical sources, opposition, and concentration.[41] According to Rendsburg, in

[40] Brown Jones, "The Message," 72.

[41] Gary Rendsburg, *Linguistic Evidence for the Northern Origin of Selected Psalms*, SBL Monograph Series 43 (Scholars Press: Atlanta, 1990), 15-16.

order for a feature to be northern, it has to appear in northern sources, it has to pattern a legitimate linguistic feature found in other sources, it needs to have a dialectal opposite in southern Hebrew, and the particular text in question needs to have a high concentration of such features. In his 1990 monograph, *Linguistic Evidence for the Northern Origin of Selected Psalms*, he applies these criteria to the psalms and finds a total of 35 psalms that evidence northern origin, including the whole of the Asaphite collection. Within this group of psalms, he cites 24 distinct ways in which they display a northern dialect.

Rendsburg's approach, however, suffers from a number of methodological shortcomings.[42] Though Hurivitz's use of linguistic features to date a given text from the Hebrew Bible, particularly through the use of "Aramaisms," is helpful for determining the relative dating of a text, it becomes much more complicated when applied to synchronic or dialectal concerns. For example, Hurivitz himself admits that there are different ways in which Aramaic has entered the Hebrew language, with dialectal influence being one of several.[43] Sometimes these influences are not the result of incorporation into the spoken language of the writers: Hurivitz notes that some types of texts show affinities with Aramaic because of genetic connections between Hebrew and Aramaic (early poetry), that Aramaic flavoured words would be typical of certain genres of texts (wisdom literature),[44] and that other texts consciously employ Aramaisms when introducing speech in an Aramean context (2 Kgs 6). According to Hurivitz, only some appearances of Aramaisms are the result of linguistic borrowing and incorporation into the language, whether manifest in dialectal (north-south) or chronological (early-late) differences. Given this complicated situation, and the varied ways in which Aramaic influence appears in Hebrew texts, merely noting Aramaic connections is insufficient to demonstrate dialectal

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[42] Space does not permit a full analysis of Rendsburg's work on dialectology. For analyses of his research, see William Schniedewind and Daniel Sivan, "The Elijah-Elisha Narratives: A Test Case for the Northern Dialect of Hebrew," *JQR* 87 (1997): 303-337, as well as the more recent treatment in Na'ama Pat El, "Israelian Hebrew: A Re-Evaluation," *VT* 67 (2017): 1-37.

[43] Avi Hurivitz, "Hebrew and Aramaic in the Biblical Period: The Problem of 'Aramaisims' in Linguistic Research on the Hebrew Bible," in *Biblical Hebrew: Studies in Chronology and Typology*, ed. Ian Young, JSOTSS 369 (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 24-37.

[44] As Young notes, the Aramaic variant of a particular Hebrew word may have been the correct usage in a wisdom context: "The replacement of a common Early Biblical Hebrew term need not reflect a chronological difference, but rather that in, say, the Wisdom literature, an Aramaic equivalent is the correct usage" Ian Young, et al, *Linguistic Dating of Biblical Texts*, Two Volumes (Equinox Publishing Ltd: London, 2008), vol. II, 74. Note that Solomon's wisdom was compared to the wisdom of the "men of the east" (1 Kgs 5:10 [Eng 4:30]), and the entirety of Job is located east of the Jordan (Job

dependence. There are simply not enough data available to differentiate clearly between these varied Aramaic influences.[45]

Rendsburg's appeal to other Semitic languages in determining a northern dialect effectively restricts the use of related languages (Phoenician, Aramaic, Ugaritic) to the north. In order to explain *hapax legomena*, strange syntax, or a different morphology, Rendsburg turns to these other languages to show the cosmopolitan and additive nature of the northern dialect. However, in doing so, the southern kingdom is denied influence from these languages for determining its own dialect, and effectively makes northern all unique features that have parallels in other languages.[46] Rather than being a helpful tool for the philology and morphology of Hebrew in its Northwest Semitic environment, Ugaritic parallels become proof only for northern expressions of Hebrew. Many of Rendsburg's conclusions, especially on the psalms of Asaph, imply that, because a particular feature is evident in these other languages, it must belong to the northern dialect. Allowing the Hebrew of both northern and southern varieties more latitude in their inheritance of common West Semitic idioms and vocabulary may be a more even-handed approach to the data.

Supposing that Rendsburg's hypothesis is to be maintained, one still has to accept that any northern text currently in the Hebrew Bible has come through the mediation of scribal schools in Jerusalem. Not only have they been adopted into a southern setting, but minute dialectal differences would have been levelled out at the hands of later transmitters. Especially given that the earliest transmission of the Hebrew text was consonantal, many of the subtle differences in vowel pronunciation would be eliminated by the time of the Masoretic pointings.[47] Given this methodological problem, the best external source for obtaining information about a northern dialect is the evidence from epigraphic sources in northern contexts. However, barring new

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[45] Pat El, "Israelian Hebrew," 10.

[46] The following are examples from Rendsburg's analysis of the psalms of Asaph that cite extra-biblical evidence for a northern dialect: Hebrew אוּל from 73:4 is a *hapax* with the only parallel being from Ugaritic (*ul*), מֶסֶךְ is a *hapax* (75:9) with the only cognate in Ugaritic, and the conjunction *p* in Psa 50:9 is only seen a handful of times in the Hebrew Bible (cp. Job 9:20). Using *hapax legomenon* to prove the existence of a dialectal feature is impossible, and cannot be solved by appealing to other languages. His use of rare words is striking, given that his outlined methodology cautions against using *hapax* in determining the northern dialect.

[47] For example, one of the main differences between Phoenician and Hebrew is the marked increase of the "Canaanite Shift" in Phoenician (i.e. /á/ > /ó/; Randall Garr, *Dialect Geography of Syria-Palestine, 1000-586 BCE* [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004], 219). Determining the influence of this feature in north Israel Hebrew, however, is impossible without vowel letters or vocalic transcription from other languages.

discoveries from the northern kingdom, there are few evident differences between the two. In Garr's comprehensive work on northwest Semitic dialects, he noted only two differences between northern and southern dialects: the north tended to monophthongize diphthongs in the absolute state, while the south did not (*yēn* in the Samaritan ostraca instead of southern *yayin*), and the north witnessed the formation of "year" in the absolute state as שת rather than the southern שׁנה. To this, one could add the difference in spelling of the theophoric element of personal names from northern onomastic sources (*-yw* instead of *-yhw*).[48] External evidence for a dialectal approach to Hebrew are, therefore, lacking.[49]

That there were regional variations in Hebrew is undeniable (see the Shibboleth episode, Jud 12:6ff), but whether or not this is consistently reflected in texts considered "northern" remains to be seen. Christopher Rollston argues that, though there were diachronic developments, there was a synchronic consistency to the orthography of Hebrew between north and south, which indicates to him the presence of a standard scribal school across the two.[50] If there were no appreciable differences in the way that texts were written, then perhaps there was a common scribal tradition and written standard, though clearly differences in the vernacular. Indeed, though there was a

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[48] Garr, *Dialect Geography*, 225-227. Though these three points are noted in epigraphic sources, they are not really attested in the Hebrew Bible. One exception is perhaps the prophetic pun that exists between קֵיץ and קֵץ in Amos 8:1-2, where both would have been pronounced *qēṣ* to a northern audience. Even those who take evidence from the Hebrew Bible tend towards more conservative conclusions about the extent of a northern Israel dialect. Including these three already mentioned, Schniedewind notes three other features, drawn from direct speech from the Hebrew Bible in northern contexts (William Schniedewind, *A Social History of Hebrew*, The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013], 97-98). If Rendsburg's list of 24 northern dialect features in the psalms of Asaph are compared to the list proposed by Schniedewind, only one datum emerges common to both: the feminine singular nominal absolute ending -t (חַיִת, Psa 74:19; cf. GKC §80f, g), but even this example could be a rendering of the feminine plural without *matres lectionis* (cf. LXX τοῖς θηρίοις), or even a textual error (Kraus, *Psalms 60-150: A Commentary*, trans. Hilton C. Oswald [Minneapolis: Augsburg], 96). One example is not sufficient to bare the burden of proof for a northern dialect.

[49] This lack of evidence could stem from the dearth of material that has been uncovered. Shmuel Aḥituv, in his collection of Hebrew epigraphy, cites only the following as specifically northern texts: Izbet Sartah abecedary, Gezer Calendar, Fragment of a Royal Stele from Samaria, Samaria Ostraca, Kuntillet Ajrud, Calah Ivory, Inscriptions on Vessels in Hazor, and the Tel Kinrot inscription, see Shmuel Aḥituv, *Echoes from the Past* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2008). Based on the scarcity of the material he cautions against using epigraphy to determine dialectal differences: "We are evidently in need of a much larger and more varied corpus of inscriptions before linguists can lay down guidelines for the spelling and pronunciation of the different branches of ancient Hebrew and the neighbouring dialects during the First Temple period," (Aḥituv, *Echoes from the Past*, 4-5).

[50] Christopher Rollston, "Scribal Education in Ancient Israel: The Old Hebrew Epigraphic Evidence," *BASOR* 344 (2006): 58. Even their similarities in form and orthography (despite slight variations) with other inscriptions from the southern Levant, such as the Mesha inscription (KAI 181) and the Amman citadel inscription (KAI 307) imply that the written register does not necessarily encode dialectal variation. Spelling tends to be conservative in spite of radical differences or developments in speech patterns, as exemplified by the identical spelling of II-*yohd* or II-*waw* nouns in the construct and absolute states (Schniedewind, *A Social History of Hebrew*, 91).

difference between north and south in the spoken language, this may not have been manifest in standard literary Hebrew, especially as northern texts were transmitted through Jerusalem.[51] Schniedewind has found a number of northern dialectal features in direct speech embedded in the narrative texts (such as the Elijah-Elisha text) as a phenomenon of "code-switching," but the principle of putting an accent on foreign characters would not cross over into the writing of psalms.[52] Some of Rendsburg's claims about unique features in the psalms of Asaph may have merit in reflecting dialectal variants,[53] but, by themselves, they do not constitute a definite proof for the northern origin of these psalms.

2.5 Geography

In recent years, much attention in Psalms scholarship has been directed towards using ancient iconography for understanding the literary imagery in the Psalms. This exegetical tool was pioneered by Othmar Keel and his associates at the University of Fribourg, but is now commonly found among works by both European and North American scholars. This school attempts to use ancient images as productive resources for exegesis of a text, rather than simply being decorative or illustrative in the margins of textbooks. Icons enable an interpreter to "visualize the source domains and background knowledge that give rise to biblical metaphors."[54] Modern readers tend to miss that much of the literary imagery in the Hebrew Bible could be, and often was, artistically represented in some physical medium. Instead of focusing solely on the

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[51] Schniedewind, *A Social History of Hebrew*, 74.

[52] Schniedewind, *A Social History of Hebrew*, 90. Despite my hesitations towards Rendsburg's methods and conclusions, one feature that he describes in Psa 76 is difficult to explain. Instead of the usual *he* prefix for the *hitpolel* stem, 76:5 clearly employs an Aramaic-esque *ʾaleph* performative (אֶשְׁתּוֹלָלוּ). Of the twelve other cases of *hitpael*, *hitpalpel*, and *hitpolel* verbs in the Asaph collection, this is the only one with such a feature, and the rest have the standard *he* preformative. All Northwest Semitic dialects in the Iron Age have a *he* prefix on the Ct-stem (including Aramaic; Garr, *Dialect Geography*, 122), but this verb uses something like a later Aramaic *ʾaphel.* Dahood notes a number of such cases from Ugaritic and the Hebrew Bible (Dahood, *Psalms II*, 31), but does not offer an explanation for the alternation. Perhaps the Psalmist is using the tactic of code-switching in the context of foreign invaders.

[53] This is especially so in those cases that reflect non-standard morphology or syntax. Scholarship simply does not have access to the proper amount of lexical features to make a qualified statement about the relative vocabularies of north and south. Of the 24 proofs Rendsburg gleans from the psalms of Asaph, only five reflect differences of morphology or syntax, and even there work needs to be done to see if those differences are real, artificially produced through an error in textual transmission, or aberrations in the southern vernacular.

[54] Izaak de Hulster, Brent Strawn, and Ryan P. Bonfiglio, *Iconographic Exegesis of the Hebrew Bible: An Introduction to its Method and Practice*, eds. Izaak de Hulster, Brent Strawn, and Ryan P. Bonfiglio, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), 25.

grammatical and semantic import of a given text, those who appeal to iconographic exegesis attempt to image these graphic contours behind the metaphorical language.[55]

Geography, in many ways, functions similarly to iconography. Like physical, artistic images, geographic references find their way into the poetic expression of ancient Israel; and, like iconography, modern exegetes can better understand those poetic expressions by looking at and analyzing the object that is imaged. The use of a specific geographic image on the part of the author, like the image of any given artistic feature, presupposes a familiarity with the image. When applying the results from the study of icons in the ancient world, modern scholars need to assume that the poet was familiar in some manner with the iconographic image (material or conceptual) of whatever poetic device happens to be under analysis.[56] Often, because of the large amount of material found outside of ancient Israel, recourse is made to these other cultures without necessarily having a tangible, material intermediary evident in ancient Israel.[57] Nevertheless, icons and images can easily be diffused among different groups through ubiquitous material like seal stamps, amulets, and figurines. References to physical geography, on the other hand, tend to remain local, as there is not an appropriate medium to transfer the image. People in the modern world, with its luxuries of photography, video, and National Geographic can easily grasp references to such diverse places as Easter Island, Paris, and Santorini. If an ancient poet uses a particular geographic feature as a poetic device, such as the Kishon river or the anti-Lebanon range, he himself is certainly familiar with the image, perhaps even first-hand, and he expects his audience to be so as well. The further the audience is displaced from the natural feature, the more likely it is that they would have misunderstood the reference.

Physical features of the land as poetic images of the land are not the only type of geographic image, as the Hebrew poets often used geography to describe the mytho-symbolic

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[55] William P. Brown, *Seeing the Psalms: A Theology of Metaphor* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 4.

[56] Izaak de Hulster, Brent Strawn, and Ryan P. Bonfiglio, "*Iconographic Exegesis,*" 25-26.

[57] Among the criticisms of the growing field of iconographic exegesis, this has been one of the most difficult to overcome. How can we know that the authors were familiar enough with this particular image to use it as a literary device? And, is there a necessary connection with a physical image, or has the physical image evolved and been abstracted to a literary one? An obvious concession to this concern would be to find iconographic material native to Syria-Palestine before and during the time that the text was written. For an example, see Othmar Keel and Christoph Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of Gods in Ancient Israel,* trans. Thomas H. Trapp (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998).

world of ancient thought. Just as the divine beings were really extensions of terrestrial phenomena, the divine, cosmic geography was defined by elements of the physical world. Therefore, references to the sea, rivers, or the cosmic mountain do not need a physical presence for the audience to understand the reference. These are enlarged images of things the audience was already familiar with. For example, the ever-flowing rivers (Psa 74:15) are quite possibly just a representation on the cosmic scale of the small, perennial springs that abound in the hill country, and probably do not indicate the headwaters of the Jordan river.

Given these parameters, physical geography can play an important role in determining the northern or southern provenance for a particular text in the Hebrew Bible. Though similar in many respects, each territory had features specific to their environment that poets could employ when crafting the psalms, such as the Negev in the south, or the hills and valleys of Galilee in the north. References to political or territorial elements specific to either north or south would have carried a different weight depending on their respective national audiences. In the following sections, I will examine two areas in which geography can be used to determine the provenance of this group of psalms: political boundaries, and symbolism.

2.5.1 Northern Geographical References

2.5.1.1 Tribal Names

In the history of interpretation for the psalms of Asaph, one of the first indicators to scholarship that some of these psalms came from a northern sphere was the reference to northern tribal names.[58] Ephraim (78:9, 67; 80:3), Manasseh (80:3), and Benjamin (80:3) all receive at least one mention. These references are disproportionate to the rest of the Psalter, as elsewhere Manasseh and Ephraim appear in a lone prophetic oracle (60:9=108:9), and Benjamin surfaces in a ritual procession (Psa 68:28)—both of which psalms have a complicated attribution of

[58] Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 152; Artur Weiser, *Psalms: A Commentary*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), 547; Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, WBC 20 (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1990), 309; Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, *Psalms 2: A Commentary on Psalms 51-100*, trans. Linda M. Malony (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 311.

provenance, though decidedly not attributed to Asaph.[59] Across the Hebrew Bible, one of the names frequently applied to the northern territory, though not a specific tribe, is Joseph (e.g. Amos 5:6), which is used in four different psalms of Asaph (77:16; 78:67; 80:2; 81:5). When looking for this name in the rest of the psalter, the results are quite meagre, with the lone reference to Joseph being to the patriarchal figure, not as a reference to the northern tribes (105:17). That the psalms of Asaph have a relatively large amount of these names certainly indicates that a unique social setting lies behind them, and probably means that these psalms are northern in origin.

2.5.1.2 Table of Nations

The list of nations in Psalm 83:6-8 is the richest source for geographic imagery in the Asaphite corpus. Ten different political or ethnic entities are named and are gathered to fight against Israel: Edom, the Ishmaelites, Moab, the Hagrites,[60] Gebal,[61] Ammon, Amalek,[62] Philistia, Tyre, and Asshur. This list appears to move in a number of clusters, the first three

[59] The dating of Psa 60 is difficult. The portion that contains the references to the northern tribes is a prophecy quoted by the psalmist as part of their complaint to Yahweh over a military defeat. The main datum for determining the setting of the Psalm is the plea of the psalmist for someone to "lead me to Edom" (60:11). Because Edom was largely an adversary of Judah, this psalm likely belongs in the south, although it certainly witnesses an idealization of the united kingdom. Such an idealization could fit in the time of the United Kingdom (see 60:1-2), or to a time where the United Kingdom had become an ideal, such as the reign of Hezekiah. The text of Psalm 68 has a complex history, and it was edited to function within the pre-exilic Jerusalem temple and ultimately the post-exilic temple, but the original setting for this psalm appears to have been in northern sanctuary on Mt. Tabor (Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 49-51).

[60] The Hagrites are mentioned as desert invaders harassing the territory of Gilead—the tribal territory of Manasseh and Gad (1 Chr 5:10, 19-20). Though Hagar (הָגָר) is the name of Ishmael's mother in Genesis (J, Gen 16:1-16; E, 21:9-17), the name can also be found as a place in northern Arabia (Bar 3:23; Arb. al-Ḥijr, Strabo). As with other tribes near the Arabian deserts, they would have come into the region of settlements when the desert places where they were sojourning would not longer sustain them (note Midian, Jud 6:1ff).

[61] Gebal is probably not Byblos (MT גְּבַל [Eze 27:9]; Akk *gublu*), but a nomadic tribe somewhere in the northern part of the Arabian peninsula. As Abraham surveys the land from Ramath Hazor in the Genesis Apocryphon (1Q20 21:10-12), Gebal is on an east-west axis with Kadesh, which is in the southwestern Negev; and, in the retelling of the "Kings of the East" pericope from Gen 14, 1Q20 21:29 has the mountains of Gebal (טורי גבל) in southern Transjordan. Josephus also mentions a Γοβολῖτης in *Ant*. 2.6 in the same area. Byblos had no historic interest in the affairs of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, and the only Phoenician polities that are atteseted to have done so were Tyre and Sidon.

[62] Amalek is described in the Pentateuch (Exo 17:8) and DtrH (1 Sam 30:1, 18) as a tribe in the southern Negev desert, but this is difficult to reconcile with their presence closer to the Jordan valley (Num 24:20; Psa 83:8). They likely were based out of southern Transjordan (around Edom, Gen 36:16) and, as proper nomads, spread wherever resources were available. Judges 12:15 even seems to indicate that the Amalekites were at home in the hill country of Ephraim. There, a minor judge, Abdon the son of Hillel, was buried in his ancestral village, Pirathon (פִּרְעָתוֹן). This village is located about 9km west-south-west of Shechem, at a site now called *Far'ata* (J. Simons, *The Geographical and Topographical Texts of the Old Testament* [Leiden: Brill, 1959], 663-665). The text then apposes the land of Ephraim with the hill country of Amalek, indicating that they are synonymous. Evidently, the Amalekites were truly nomadic in their area of settlement if they could reside in such a wide variety of areas.

including a Transjordanian kingdom (Edom, Moab, Ammon), accompanied by a nomadic tribe (Ishmaelites, Hagrites, Gebal, Amalek), then two coastal polities (Philistia and Tyre), and the list ultimately culminates with an international threat (Assyria). The pairing of Transjordanian kingdoms with nomadic tribes probably indicates the relative area in which those tribes were settling, and that the smaller players were positioned in this way to spatially relate them to the more fixed Transjordanian kingdoms.[63] Most of these could then be placed east of the Jordan, with both Philistia and Tyre as western mirrors, and Assyria the final threat from the north. Though lying to the east of Israel on a modern map, armies from Mesopotamia, like Assyria, were seen as coming from the north (cp. Jer 1:14; Zeph 2:13).

This miniature table of nations who conspire against Israel for its destruction represents the nations around an idealized united kingdom.[64] Once the nomadic tribes are paired with a settled kingdom, the geographic progression moves from south to north (Edom, Moab, Ammon), then moves from east to west (Philistia) before again moving south to north (Tyre, Assyria). This places both Judah and Israel between interested parties on all sides. Though it may be tempting to place this list entirely in the north, the presence of Edom and Philistia mitigate against this hypothesis. To be sure, polities such as Tyre would have only been a concern for the north, but other entities appear to be more appropriate in a southern setting. From what can be reconstructed from the Hebrew Bible, as well as and archaeology and historical geography, Edom was only a problem for the southern kingdom of Judah (1 Kings 22:47; 2 Kings 3:4-9; 2 Kings 8:20; Jer 13:18-19; Arad 24, 40).[65] Despite the significant amount of material in the books of Samuel and Kings dealing with the Philistines, the Philistines only rarely managed to engage

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[63] Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 342. For an anthropological look at the symbiosis that occurs being nomadic tribes and the cities around which they settle, see M.B. Rowton, "Autonomy and Nomadism in Western Asia," *Orientalia* 42 (1972): 247-258. He notes that this phenomenon happens where cities sit along the edge of deserts, where nomadic tribes could roam with their flocks. Though his concern is more in northern Syria (Mari), this is precisely the geographic situation that obtains in Transjordan.

[64] Goulder, *Psalms of Asaph*, 168, claims that this list reflects the extent of Jeroboam II's territorial expansion (2 Kgs 14:25). However, compared to later times, the Assyrian influence in the Levant during the time of Jeroboam II hardly reflects the way in which the nations are presented in Psalm 83, with Assyria being the most severe threat. The fact that Jeroboam II could be so bold in the geopolitical sphere is largely because of the relative weakness of the Assyrian empire during his reign under Ashur-dan III and Ashur-nirari V. The presence of the Amalekites, Edomites, and Philistines would also indicate that the enemies of Judah are included in this list.

[65] Though the Edomites were directly south of Moab, a territory occasionally controlled by the northern kingdom (KAI 181:4-6; 2 Kgs 3:5), Edom's interest lay more to the west and to the south. Geographically, they were a convenient stop for caravans from Arabia on their way to the Mediterranean port of Gaza, and Edom had much more to gain from encroaching into Judahite territory across the Rift Valley than by moving north into Moab.

the northern territories in battle.[66] The Philistines stood to profit more by moving east into the Judean Shephelah rather than north into either the plains of Sharon or the hill country of Ephraim. At least from the time of Ahab, the contested battlegrounds for the northern kingdom were to the northeast, against Aram-Damascus, not towards Philistia. Because the enemies described surrounded both the northern and southern kingdoms, and because some are particular to either kingdom, the text seems to have in mind a threat against a combined and united nation.[67] That this grouping is symbolic and does not represent an historical coalition is apparent by the 9 + 1 formula, with Assyria as the enemy *par excellence* at the end of the list.[68] Each member of the list, therefore, is important, and attributing the addition of Judah's enemies to a later redactor would violate the symbolic nature of the list. As will be discussed later, this perspective fits well during the reign of Hezekiah.

2.5.1.3 Northern Judges

As the psalm progresses, the destruction wished upon these hostile kingdoms draws from the exploits of two northern judges: Deborah and Gideon. Specifically, the psalmist does this by mentioning the names of their defeated enemies: Sisera and Jabin, and Oreb, Zeeb, Zebah, and Zalmunna, respectively. These examples would have had a much greater rhetorical effect on a northern audience than a southern, and naturally would have come to the south by means of northern sources. The fact that most of the characters in the book of Judges were of northern origin, save for a few minor ones from Judah (Jud 3:7-11),[69] does not diminish this point. Apart

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[66] During Iron Age IA, the Philistines were a major antagonist to the nascent Israelite confederation, including the north. They were able to access the Jordan valley through the Jezreel valley (1 Sam 28-29, 31) and were the likely culprits for the destruction of the worship centre at Shiloh, in the territory of Ephraim. The north Israelite siege of Gibbethon in the late 10th c. BCE (1 Kgs 15:27), along the coastal plain north of Ekron, probably had more to do with northern Israel cutting off Judahite access to the coast than curbing Philistine aggression.

[67] Though dependant on a revocalization, Psalm 76:10 could also support the notion of nations surrounding an idealized united kingdom. Among the various options for translation, Kraus (*Psalms 60-150: A Commentary*, trans. Hilton C. Oswald [Minneapolis: Augsberg, 1993], 108) has suggested that two of the words should be revocalized to geopolitical entities (אָדָם [man] to אֱדֹם [Edom], and חֲמֹת [wraths] to חֲמָת [Hamath]). The resulting translation ("Indeed, fierce Edom will praise you, what is left of Hamath shall celebrate [in a feast]") parallels the two kingdoms on either end of the Levant bringing tribute to Yahweh in Jerusalem. Hamath marked the northern extent of the kingdoms of Solomon (1 Kgs 8:65) and Jeroboam II (2 Kgs 14:25, 28), while Edom is clearly the most southern settled kingdom, relative to Judah. This pairing of Hamath and Edom would incorporate a united kingdom, and this may in fact be the scope the psalmist has in mind.

[68] For more on the historical setting of this psalms, see the discussion later in section 4.4.

[69] Though the minor judge Ibzan is said to have come from Bethlehem, the village in question is likely the one found in Zebulun, in Galilee (Jos 19:15), not the more famous one found south of Jerusalem.

from a few references to the judges in the Deuteronomic history (1 Sam 12:9, 11; 2 Sam 12:11) —itself a product of a northern school—tradition groups from the southern kingdom do not pick up on these historical traditions.[70] When appealing to the ancestral past for warrior imagery, southern tradents would more likely draw on the Davidic traditions (Isa 34:6; 63:1). These traditions about the Judges concerned northern tribes exclusively, were certainly northern in origin, and ultimately were incorporated into the Judahite book of Judges when the Deuteronomistic history began to be compiled.

Not only are the enemies mentioned, but locations specific to their battles are also noted: the river Kishon and Ein-Dor (83:9-10).[71] Surprisingly, it is quite rare for Yahweh's intervention in history on Israel's behalf to be remembered in later literature at a specific locale. Those redemptive events may happen in a particular place, but the remembrance of the events does not often incorporate the geographic data. Obvious exceptions to this statement would include the Red Sea (Psa 106:9; 136:13) and Zion (Psa 76:2-3), but when stacked up against such monumental events as the exodus and 701 BCE, Kishon and Ein-Dor seem rather pedestrian. By mentioning these very local features of northern Israel, the psalmist may be trying to evoke memories of a place that his audience would be familiar with, and who would have associated those particular locations with Yahweh's past actions on behalf of northern groups.

2.5.1.4 Pastures of God

In two separate occasions in Psalm 83, the psalmist puts words in the mouth of Yahweh's foes. First, the nations conspire to annihilate the nation of Israel in Psa 83:5 ("let us annihilate them as a nation," נַכְחִידֵם מִגּוֹי), and, second, the princes of Midian from the Gideon cycle (Oreb, Zeev, Zebah, and Zalmunah) plot to take possession of the "pastures of God" (נְאוֹת אֱלֹהִים; Psa

[70] Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11*, AB 5 (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 44-56. As will be argued later in this thesis, Isaiah's use of these northern judges (9:3; 10:26) represents a conscious use of northern material to communicate, in part, to a northern audience.

[71] The Kishon stream collects and gathers all of the runoff from the hills surrounding the Jezreel valley and then meanders towards the Plain of Acco, and empties in the Mediterranean Sea. In the poetic account of Deborah and Barak's victory, the flooding of the Kishon played a key role in the incapacitation of Sisera's chariots (Jud 5:21). If Ein Dor can be identified with Kh. Ṣafṣâfeh, this would place it at the foot of Mt. Tabor—the site of the battle in the prose account of Judges 4 (Yohanan Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1967], 376).

83:13).[72] The psalmist draws clear parallels between the two of them, as the Judges narratives are invoked to remind God of his past deliverance and present obligations to save in light of the total threat presented by the coalition of nations. The word (נָוֶה) used here by the Midianites presents some unique problems. It appears to have a different gender in the singular and the plural, with the word נָוֶה only appearing in the masculine singular and נָוֶה only appearing in the feminine plural.[73] The meaning is consistent between the two, primarily indicating pastures for sheep in the wilderness (Jer 9:9; 23:10; Joel 1:19; 2:22; Psa 65:13), but can be poetically abstracted to indicate either a human (Psa 79:7; Isa 27:10; 33:20) or divine (2 Sam 15:25; Exo 15:13) dwelling place, albeit with pastoral imagery. Within the context of the psalm, נְאוֹת אֱלֹהִים likely indicates that the Midianites viewed the land of Israel as a place for their sheep to graze without end (Jud 6:1-6). Living on the thin line between survival and famine, nomads from the eastern deserts often crossed the Jordan in search of food for themselves and pasture for their flocks. This provides clean parallels with the narrative of Judges 6-7, as the Midianites come in from the east and occupy—and graze in—the very fertile Jezreel valley (Jud 7:1).[74] By paralleling the two plots of foreign invaders the psalmist may have also drawn a parallel in their invasion and occupation of specific areas in Israel. When the Assyrians conquered northern Israel and annexed it as a province, the only city they went to the trouble to rebuild was the provincial capital of Megiddo[75] in the Jezreel valley, and so perhaps the prayer to "do to these enemies as you did to Midian and Sisera" could be a coded plea to do to the current captors of the Jezreel valley as to the previous invaders, the Midianites. This valley was featured prominently in the geopolitical schemes of Israel, and its use in this psalm would be especially effective for a northern audience who had witnessed yet one more conquerer marching through the Jezreel valley.

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[72] Alternatively, this could be translated as a superlative, "the best pasturelands." For more on this construction in Hebrew, see the following discussion in 2.5.1.5.

[73] This distinction holds for most of the approximately 47 occurrences of this word, with one noted exceptions: Job 8:6 uses the feminine נָוֶה in the singular (וְשִׁלַּם נְוֵת צִדְקֶךָ).

[74] Dahood renders the phrase as a superlative ("the best pastures"; *Psalms II*, AB 17 [Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1968], 276), which would certainly describe the Jezreel valley for a flock of hungry sheep.

[75] Avraham Faust, "Settlement, Economy, and Demography under Assyrian Rule in the West: The Territories of the Former Kingdom of Israel as a Test Case," *JAOS* 135 (2015): 770.

2.5.1.5 Large Trees and Hills

The Hebrew phrase found in Psa 50:10, בְּהַרְרֵי־אָלֶף, (in the hills of a thousand?) is a complicated and curious phrase. Perhaps the greatest hindrance in translating it as it appears in the MT is that Hebrew nouns are not generally bound in construct to numerals.[76] Recognizing this difficulty, both translators and exegetes have amended the MT in various ways. The Septuagint reads the consonants אלף as "cattle" (I אֶלֶף), but is forced to add a conjunction between the two words in question because of the previous mention of בְּהֵמוֹת "beasts" (κτήνη ἐν τοῖς ὄρεσιν καὶ βόες "the beasts in the hills and cattle"; cf. Syr ܚܝܘܬܐ ܕܛܘܪܐ ܘܚܝܘܬܐ ܕܬܠܐ, "and the beasts in the hills, and the bulls").[77] Some commentators attempt to work with the confusing syntax as found in the MT,[78] while others amend the text. Kraus simply drops the *peh* from the second word, which produces an intelligible הַרְרֵי־אֵל and has an exact parallel in Psa 36:7 (צִדְקָתְךָ כְּהַרְרֵי־אֵל),[79] but he does not offer an explanation for the presence of the *peh*.[80] Mitchell Dahood suggests that the *peh* is really a conjunction found elsewhere in Semitic sources and should begin the next clause.[81] This would separate the *peh* from אלף to produce הררי־אל, as Kraus and Craigie prefer, without having to disregard the letter without explanation. The inclusion of the *peh* to the reconstructed אֵל appears to have come at an early stage of the text's history, as every ancient witness has the combination—though they understand it differently—, so its addition through a scribal mistake would not be a reasonable explanation.

Once the precise form is isolated without the *peh*, a proper translation of the phrase is still necessary. R.J. Tournay argues that the phrase "mountains of God" indicates the highest of

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[76] Rendsburg, *Linguistic Evidence*, 74. Rendsburg claims that this never happens, but there are 364 examples of an immediate combination of a noun in the construct state and a numeral, and more exist with an intervening article. Many of these are cases are used for a genitive of measure (JM §129f), and most of the occurrences happen in narrative texts for the description of time or measurement. In all cases, however, the numeral is acting adjectivally for an implied or explicit substantive (i.e. בֶּן־חֲמֵשׁ מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה, Gen 5:32). In the case of Psa 50:10, the substantive enumerated is at best unclear.

[77] By contrast, Aquila stays closer to the text also found in the MT, but inserts a conjunction to make better sense of the construct (κτήνη ἐν ὄρεσι καὶ χιλίων).

[78] Weiser, *Psalms*, 392; Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 362.

[79] Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 363, implies that this may be the better option.

[80] Kraus, *Psalms 1-59*, 487.

[81] For comments on a potential witness to this feature in Job 9:20, see Mitchell Dahood, "Some Northwest-Semitic Words in Job," *Biblica* 38 (1957): 312; and Marvin Pope, *Job*, AB 15 (New York: Doubleday), 72-73. Of particular relevance for Hebrew, it is found in Ugaritic (*p nšt*, KTU 1.5.1.26) and in Northwest Semitic Dialects (Samal, KAI 214:3, 13, 14,30, 31; 215:12; 216:18; and Sefire, KAI 222 B2:4, 6). Further afield, it is found in classical Arabic and Old South Arabic (HALOT 907).

mountains,[82] rather than a description of their aesthetic character ("majestic mountains").[83] In the parallelism of Psa 36:7, Yahweh's righteousness extends to the הַרְרֵי־אֵל, while his acts of judgment to the תְּהוֹם רַבָּה ("great deep"). The psalmist in this case is clearly drawing a spacial polarity between the two, and is using the phrase "mountains of God," not to refer to the hills of Israel's ancestral home (i.e. Yahweh's mountains), but to the highest mountains in the area—the mountains of Upper Galilee and Lebanon (cf. 1 Sam 14:15; Song 8:6; Jon 3:3).[84] Tournay goes so far as to suggest that the phrase is Phoenician in origin.[85] The resulting translation of 50:10 thus creates a neat parallel between the animals that inhabit the forests, and those that occupy the mountains: "For the creatures of the forest are mine, even the beasts on the highest mountains." Upper Galilee in the tribal territory of Naphtali is a unique territory in the geography of ancient Israel, as its rising heights and imposing cedars could only be found here.[86] Perhaps this image was employed in order to draw on the imagery available to a northern audience.

"Cedar" (אֶרֶז) is a relatively common botanical term in the Hebrew Bible (73x) for *cedrus libani*, but the cedar tree is not indigenous to most parts of ancient Israel. Only in the upper reaches of Galilee, towards the territory of Phoenicia, is there an appropriate environment for cedars to thrive. Therefore, in most cases from the Hebrew Bible, whenever it references cedars, the connection with Lebanon is made explicit (i.e. אַרְזֵי הַלְּבָנוֹן), and the lack of specificity could

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[82] R.J. Tournay, "Le Psaume XXXVI: Structure et Doctrine," *RB* 90 (1983): 12-13. See also the phrase הַר־אֱלֹהִים in Psa 68:16, which is in parallel with הַר־בָּשָׁן, and probably refers to Mt. Hermon. Though high mountains were often the abode for a pantheon of deities (and so a "mountain of the gods"), the reference here is likely an expanse of the use of אֵל as a superlative.

[83] Nouns in construct with a divine name can be used to indicate the superlative (IBHS §14.5b; JM §141n; cf. UT §13.22), though the exact development of this feature are unknown. Thomas suggests that this linguistic feature could have developed from colloquial use (cp. "god-forsaken") or an expression of something containing a numinous quality, David Winton Thomas, "A Consideration of Some Unusual Ways of Expressing the Superlative in Hebrew," *VT* 3 (1953): 219. Bernard Couroyer suggests that the popular use of the phrase "land of God" in Egyptian refers to the Phoenician coast and is a translation of a Canaanite "land of El," Bernard Couroyer, "La terre de Dieu," *RB* 78 (1971): 69. He further connects the use of "hills of El" (Psa 36:7) and "cedars of El" (Psa 81:11) with the geographic features of Lebanon. The area of Upper Galilee—the tribe of Naphtali—was on the border between Israel and Phoenicia and, for all intents and purposes, had a similar geography to Lebanon proper. However, the use of nouns in construct with the divine name "El" does not occur often in the Bible with the superlative sense (Isa 14:3; Eze 10:5; Psa 36:7; Psa 80:11; Job 33:4), and this has more to do with the paucity of the name "El" joined with a construct noun than an inherited expression for Lebanon from the Canaanites.

[84] Compare especially the king of Babylon's efforts to "ascend to heaven, above the highest stars (=stars of God) I will set my throne (מִמַּעַל לְכוֹכְבֵי־אֵל אָרִים כִּסְאִי)" (Isa 14:13).

[85] Tournay, "Le Psaume XXXVI," 14.

[86] Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible*, 25.

indicate that the audience was familiar enough with the three.[87] When the psalmist in Psa 80:11 describes the extent of Israel's settlement in the land with viticulture imagery, the vine moves from covering the mountains to covering even the tallest cedars (אַרְזֵי־אֵל) on those mountains. As with the "mountains of God" in Psa 50:10, the use of אֵל indicates a superlative and the "tallest of trees" are most at home in the heights of Upper Galilee, "The mountains were covered with the shade of the vine, even the tallest cedars were covered with its branches." Though the psalmist's analogy does not indicate a geographic origin for the vine, the fact that it eventually creeps up the hills of Galilee—rather than, say, Judah—betrays a concern to emphasize northern Israel as the territory of the vine. As with the other aspects of physical geography, this use of botanic imagery would have been more familiar to people who lived in the north.

2.5.1.6 Naharot Etan

In his attempt to locate the Asaphite psalms in a northern context, Rendsburg claims that the נַהֲרוֹת אֵיתָן ("ever-flowing streams") of Psa 74:15 has to be a reference to the Jordan in its strength, during the spring floods.[88] However, "ever-flowing streams" does not have to be a visual figure in order to be a viable literary image; that is, the image of an "ever-flowing stream" appears to be more conceptual than experiential.[89] These waters may echo images of the Jordan in the Rift Valley (Jos 3:16), or even the headwaters of the Jordan near Hermon, but they are

[87] People in the south would have been familiar with the imagery of cedars, especially in its use as a luxury item in palaces and temples, but most of them would never be able to see one in their natural state. It is very interesting that there are only a handful of references to cedars in the Bible that do not explicitly mention Lebanon in context. In total the Hebrew Bible mentions cedars 63 times. There are 36 uses of ארז in reference to construction projects (2 Sam 5:11; 7:2, 7; 1 Kgs 5:13, 20, 22, 24; 6:9, 10, 15, 16, 18, 20, 36; 7:2 [x2], 3, 7, 11 [x2], 9:11; 2 Kgs 14:9; Isa 9:9; Jer 22:14; Song 1:17; Ezra 3:7; 1 Chr 14:1; 17:1, 6; 22:4; 2 Chr 2:2, 7). Most of these are about the building of the temple in Jerusalem using imported cedar from Lebanon. Two references (Jer 22:14; Song 1:17) refer to cedar panelling, a luxury feature in a building. Cedar wood plays a large role in the rituals for cleansing a leper (Lev 14:4, 6, 9, 49, 51, 52; Num 19:6), and the priestly author does not mention its connection with Lebanon. Other uses (19x) specifically reference Lebanon in context when the poet mention cedars (Jud 9:15; 2 Kings 19:23; Isa 2:13; 14:8; 37:24; Jer 22:7, 23; Eze 17:3, 22; 27:5; 31:3, 8; Zec 11:1; Psa 29:5; 92:13; 104:16; Song 5:15; 2 Chr 25:18). Most of these poetic texts use the cedars of Lebanon as metaphors for human pride and arrogance. Only nine cases emerge where Lebanon is not explicitly mentioned in context (1 Kgs 10:27; 2 Chr 1:15; 9:27; Psa 80:11; 148:9; Job 40:17; Isa 41:19; Amos 2:9). Of these nine, three refer to the preponderance of cedar construction in Judah under Solomon (1 Kgs 10:27; 2 Chr 1:15; 9:27), and two are from northern sources (Psa 80:11; Amos 2:9). The remaining four all employ the cedar as an especially exotic object (Num 24:6; Job 40:17; Isa 41:19), which when paralleled with "fruit trees" indicates the totality of earth's plants (Psa 148:9). When the list is narrowed down to the two references in northern sources, the added moniker of "Lebanon" appears to be an unnecessary descriptor.

[88] Rendsburg, *Linguistic Evidence*, 74.

[89] Othmar Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms*, trans. Timothy J. Hallett (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 136.

more likely to refer to the primeval waters, especially in the mythic context of 74:12-17. As such, they are not a geographic image restricted to any particular region and would be just at home in a southern setting.

2.5.2 Southern Geographic References

2.5.2.1 Jerusalem

Throughout the psalms of Asaph, the psalmists frequently mention the southern capital of Jerusalem by a variety of names. The basic name, Jerusalem, appears twice (79:1, 3), Zion is used four times (50:2; 74:2; 76:3; 78:68), and even Salem receives a mention (76:3; cf. Gen 14:17-20). The four psalms that refer to Zion mention it as the place where God shines from (50:2), where God dwells (74:2), where he attacks his enemies from (76:3), and where he has chosen to establish his temple (78:68). Goulder proposes that these references are late editorial additions that do not reflect the original, northern context, and he claims that the editor was more careful in interjecting Jerusalem to select psalms in the beginning of the Asaphite corpus as opposed to the end of the collection.[90] In his commentary on these references, he variously posits an editorial addition of Jerusalem (50:2; 74:2; 79:1-3),[91] an original 'Gerizim' for Zion (76:3),[92] and a northern Salem (76:3; cp. LXX Gen 35:18, Σαλημ).[93] This hypothesis, while innovative, breaks down once Psa 76 is taken into consideration. If, as will be argued elsewhere,[94] the Song of Zion in Psa 76 reflects a late 8th c. BCE Jerusalem milieu, it becomes difficult to argue for the redaction of the psalm that Goulder suggests. Jerusalem is an integral part of the message of Psalm 76, and, unless the psalm as we have it has been radically altered from a supposed northern origin, it is unlikely that it originally referred to a northern sanctuary. These references throughout the psalms of Asaph, therefore, are an important component for determining the southern provenance of the group.

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[90] Goulder, *Psalms of Asaph*, 26.
[91] Goulder, *Psalms of Asaph*, 38, 61.
[92] Goulder, *Psalms of Asaph*, 85.
[93] Goulder, *Psalms of Asaph*, 86-88. Unlike most commentators, Goulder locates the exchange between Abraham and Melchizedek, king of Salem, near Shechem rather than at Jerusalem.
[94] In section 4.5.

2.5.2.2 Mt. Moriah

In Psalm 76, Salem is mentioned in parallel with Zion, which is a significant connection between the city of Jerusalem and the Melchizedekian place of worship (Gen 14:17-20). There have been attempts to place Salem in a northern context near Shechem, based on Gen 33:18 (וַיָּבֹא יַעֲקֹב שָׁלֵם עִיר שְׁכֶם "And Jacob came to Salem, a city of Shechem" cp. LXX), but this does not seem to hold.[95] Genesis 33:18's use of שָׁלֵם can reasonably be explained as an adverb ("safely") or even revocalized to שָׁלוֹם (SP).[96] Even if Salem in Gen 33:18 is a separate urban centre, many places in Palestine would, and still do, have this toponym because of the favourable nature of the word ("peace").

The word לְמוֹרָא in 76:12 is difficult to translate because it is both an abstract noun ("fear"), and the indirect object of יוֹבִילוּ ("they shall bring"), a difficulty evident in the ancient translations.[97] Some of these translate with "to the fearful one" (τῷ φοβερῷ, LXX; ܠܕܕܚܠ, Pesh; *terribili*, Vul), but all of these evidence a variant reading of נוֹרָא, rather than MT's לְמוֹרָא. The two translations that read the consonants מורא indicate that the syntax is confusing. Symmachus translates with τῷ νομοδότῃ ("to the teacher"), which is a recovalization of the Hebrew to מוֹרֶה "teacher," while Targum Jonathan expands the verse so that the word in question refers to the temple in Jerusalem, and renders it as an adjective (ייתון קורבניא לבית מוקדשׁ דחיל "Let them bring gifts to the awesome temple"). Given this confusion, Seybold suggests that the word לַמּוֹרָא (to the fear) in 76:12 is a reference to the place of Moriah (הַמֹּרִיָּה), as spelled similarly in the SP (מוראה; Gen 22:2).[98] The difference between these two spellings is the supposed replacement of

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[95] Michael C. Astour, "Salem," *Anchor Bible Dictionary* 4 (1992): 905. There are also no cities around Shechem that would be appropriate as a place where a tribute worthy priest-king would be present.

[96] The Samaritan Pentateuch's clearly renders this lexeme as an adverb describing Jacob's safe passage to the area (ויבא יעקב שלום עיר שכם). If there were any text tradition that would want to associate Salem with the city of Shechem, or one that would be willing to provide exegetical emendations explaining so, it would be the tradents of the Samaritan Pentateuch (cf. Deut 5:18, SP).

[97] While certainly a rare use of the Hebrew word מוֹרָא, the use of the word in 76:12 has parallels in other Hebrew literature. Isaiah 8:12-13 has the word twice with the meaning "object of worship," coupled with either a finite verb (תִּירְאוּ, Isa 8:12) or simple predication (מוֹרַאֲכֶם הוּא, Isa 8:13). 1QpHab 6:4 has a similar construction (וכלי מלחמותם המה מוראם "And their instruments of war—they are their object of fear"). Given these examples, the usage in MT is at least compatible with Hebrew syntax. The two *lameds* in parallel lines suggest that Yahweh is the recipient of vows (נִדְרוּ וְשַׁלְּמוּ לַיהוָה) and tribute (יוֹבִילוּ שַׁי לַמּוֹרָא).

[98] Klaus Seybold, "Jerusalem in the View of the Psalms," in *The Centrality of Jerusalem*. ed. Marcel J.H.M Poorthuis (Kampen, NL: Kok Pharos Publishing House, 1996), 7-14.

the intervocalic *yodh* by a guttural [*moriyyâ >> mor'â*]. The Samaritan Pentateuch is a vulgar text, especially compared to the MT, so it frequently employs more *matres lectiones* than the MT, and, conversely, it often does not include the vowel letters when the vowel is not pronounced.[99] Given the nature of this text, the disappearance of the *yodh* would be true to character. Seybold uses this reference to Gen 22:2 to cast the psalm as an apology for why Northerners should sacrifice at the temple in Jerusalem. Genesis 22:2 is from the Elohist, which is a northern source, so an appeal to their own traditions would be helpful in their assimilation to the central sanctuary in Jerusalem. In fact, the connection of two ancestral traditions with the city of Jerusalem would help northerners accept Hezekiah's centralization of the cult in Jerusalem (2 Kgs 18:4; 2 Chr 30:1). Apart from Gen 22, the only other reference to Moriah is in the designation of the temple mount as Mt. Moriah by the much later Chronicler (2 Chr 3:1), so this Psalm may provide an early use of Moriah in reference to the temple in Jerusalem. As in other applications from the Zion-tradition (Isa 18:7; Psa 68:30), all of Israel's neighbours (כָּל־סְבִיבָיו) are compelled to bring their "tribute" (שַׁי) to the Lord. However, the verb "to bring" (יבל, hifil) is followed by the object "tribute" (שַׁי) and indirect object in *lamed* two other times in the Hebrew Bible (Isa 18:7; Psa 68:30), but both of these use the *lamed* preposition to refer to a person, not a place. For that purpose אל is elsewhere used (אֶל־מְקוֹם שֵׁם־יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת הַר־צִיּוֹן; Isa 18:7). Admittedly, this is a small sample size to work from and the two prepositions may well be interchangeable when referring to people or places. While no firm conclusion on can be drawn—especially given the distance between the Samaritan Pentateuch and the psalm—this interpretation of למוֹרָא from Psa 76:12 represents at least circumstantial evidence for the inclusion of a northern Pentateuchal tradition in a psalm about a southern sanctuary.[100]

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[99] Moshe Florentin, "Samaritan Tradition," in *A Handbook of Biblical Hebrew: Volume 1 Periods, Corpora, and Reading Traditions,* ed. W. Randall Garr and Steven E. Fassberg (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2016), 119.

[100] A possible flaw in this argument presented above is that the medieval Samaritan reading tradition has *aleph* developing into a geminated [yy] when it follows [i] (מארם [miyyårâm], Num 23:7; Florentin, "Samaritan Tradition," 121). This would mean the word in question was pronounced *moriyya* though spelled מוראה, if [i] was pronounced immediately after the *resh*. Ben-Ḥayyim notes that this phenomenon is not restricted to Samartian Hebrew, but is manifest also in Mishnaic Hebrew and Imperial Aramaic (Ze'ev Ben-Ḥayyim, *A Grammar of Samaritan Hebrew Based on the Recitation of the Law in Comparison with the Tiberian and Other Jewish Traditions*, revised and translated by Abraham Tal [Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2000], 90).

2.6 Tradition History

When analyzing texts from the Hebrew Bible, it is important to keep in mind that scribes drew much of the content from pools of communal traditions passed down through the hands of different social groups—before texts existed, there were traditions. The various authors of the Hebrew Bible, and especially in the pre-exilic period, did not often quote from texts as such, as this would imply the presence (and priority) of physical written material. Instead, writers from the biblical world manifest connections between each other by drawing upon these streams of tradition through the use of similar vocabulary, themes, and forms, among others.[101] As these traditions were passed down they did not remain static, but were reinterpreted and reapplied according to the developing *Sitze im Leben* of the tradents and their communities.[102] When applying the method of Tradition-History, researchers usually look for evidence from two areas: 1) localization, and 2) tradents.[103] Each tradition was localized within a specific community (or group of communities), and an analysis of the tradition can lead to conclusions concerning the geographic provenance of that tradition. Different types of traditions emerge from different geographic limits—starting from the etiology of a city, to the traditions surrounding a sanctuary (Bethel, Shechem), and even unto the level of the state (Judah and Israel). Traditions were also in the care of certain groups responsible to hand down and reinterpret it, and these tradents occupied a wide array of positions in Israelite society, whether political, cultic, or familial.

The social location of the tradents behind the psalms of Asaph can be confidently placed in a cultic setting, as they display a strong emphasis on communal worship, with cultic terminology found throughout the corpus.[104] Because this datum is secure, the following analysis of the traditions evident in the psalms of Asaph will primarily attempt to answer the question of

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[101] For a comprehensive list of diagnoses for the various elements of a given tradition, see Douglas Knight, *Rediscovering the Traditions of Israel*, 3rd ed. (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2006), 5-16.

[102] A short survey of some of these "dynamic traditions" are available in Craig Broyles, "Traditions, Intertextuality, and Canon," in *Interpreting the Old Testament: A Guide for Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 164-167.

[103] Douglas Knight, "Tradition History," *ABD* 6 (1992): 636. See the comment by Broyles that echoes this dual focus: "In OT studies, these beliefs and customs are sacred, normative, and generally associated with particular persons, events, places, institutions, symbols, or rituals" (Broyles, "Traditions, Intertextuality, and Canon," 158).

[104] This is only one psalm in the Asaphite collection that could be considered an individual psalm (Psa 73). It is usually classified as a wisdom psalm, and this genre often employs first person speech within a public, didactic setting.

localization. This can be accomplished by drawing comparisons with texts that come from one of the two dominant geographic areas in ancient Palestine: the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. Though these two kingdoms share a common past and maintain a number of continuities within their respective texts, their extant traditions differ in important features.[105] At the risk of over-simplifying, Judahite traditions tended to emphasize the relatively recent phenomena of David's rule and the establishment of Zion, while northern traditions tended to emphasize Israel's ancestral and tribal past, with a focus on the prophetic figure of Moses. The following analysis will look at those traditions that are generally located within either northern or southern spheres of influence to see how their respective outlooks compare and contrast with the traditions found in the psalms of Asaph.

2.6.1 Northern Tradition History

2.6.1.1 The Elohist

Perhaps most convincingly, this collection of Psalms has a high concentration of references to Pentateuchal material typically attributed to the northern kingdom. Though admittedly with less frequency than the Deuteronomist, material from the Elohist does make an appearance at select moments in the psalms of Asaph. The Elohist has not fared well in the eyes of modern criticism, as in the past few decades some scholars have denied the existence of E,[106] or have opted to ignore the source by relying less on source-criticism in favour of more form-critical approaches.[107] Even some of those who continue to support the notion of the Elohist prefer to use the equivocation "pools of Elohist tradition" to indicate the incomplete narrative that can be

[105] For an analysis of this "parting of the ways" between north and south from a sociological perspective, see Walter Bruggeman, "Trajectories in Old Testament Literature and the Sociology of Ancient Israel," *JBL* 98 (1979): 161-185. He traces two tradition trajectories evident in southern and northern sources—a royal Davidic, and a liberation Mosaic—across the historical scope of the Hebrew Bible, and concludes with six observations for each that exist in parallel construction (Bruggeman, "Trajectories," 180-182). His discussion draws on George Mendenhall's distinction in early Israelite society between royal and peasant spheres of influence (cf. Bruggeman, "Trajectories," 171).

[106] John Van Seters, *Abraham in Tradition and History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), 309-313.

[107] Claus Westermann, *A Continental Commentary: Genesis 12-36* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1985), 31-35; David Carr, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 290-293.

reconstructed from the data.[108] In a 1972 article, Hans Walter Wolff claims that the remains of the Elohist do not produce a unified text, and that narratives from the Elohist were appended to J in the creation of JE at the expense of E's literary integrity.[109] In a recent monograph, however, Joel Baden defends the existence of two separate and independent documents, J and E, and contends that these sources were not joined into a single source (usually designated JE) until the final redaction of the Pentateuch.[110] With Baden, I will maintain that two clear sources in the non-P portions of the Pentateuch can be discerned, one of which has northern roots, but his rejection of a redactor of JE is not as convincing.[111] Among these northern traits are: a preference for (and elevation of) Moses over Aaron (Exo 32), Horeb as the divine mountain (Exo 3:1), and an emphasis on Bethel as cultic location (Gen 28:11–12, 17–18, 20–22; 35:1–8; cf. Exo 32). Other traits are shared with the northern Pentateuchal source, Deuteronomy, and the Deuteronomistic history: covenant and covenant obedience, the relationship between idolatry and the covenant people, and the priority of the leadership of prophets over kings.[112]

References to the Elohist source in the psalms of Asaph are evident in the mention of Meribah in Psa 81:8 (Deut 33:8), the allusions to the decalogue (Psa 50:18-20; Exo 20:1-17; cf. Deut 5:1-21; Hos 4:2), "honey from the rock" (Psa 81:17; Deut 32:13), and references to "foreign gods" (אֵל נֵכָר; Psa 81:10; Gen 35:2, 4; cf. Deut 31:16). When describing the movement of Israel into the land, the previous inhabitants are "driven out," which is the way E (and pre-D) typically describes Israel's entrance in the land (גרשׁ, Psa 78:55; 80:9; cf. Exo 23:28; 34:11; Josh 24:12). There are surprising thematic and linguistic links between the distribution of nations by Elyon to the sons of god in Deut 32:8-9 (בְּהַנְחֵל עֶלְיוֹן גּוֹיִם … לְמִסְפַּר בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים)[113] with Elyon in Psa 82. In Psa 82:6, Elyon sits in judgment over the "sons of Elyon" (בְּנֵי עֶלְיוֹן) for not defending the cause of justice among the nations. The inheritance of the nations distributed to the various gods

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[108] Robert Gnuse, "Northern Prophetic Traditions in the Books of Samuel and Kings as Precursor to the Elohist," *ZAW* 122 (2010): 374.

[109] Hans Walter Wolff, "The Elohistic Fragments in the Pentateuch," *Interpretation* 26 (1972): 158-173.

[110] Joel Baden, *J, E, and the Redaction of the Pentateuch*, FAT 68 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 189.

[111] For a penetrating review outlining the shortcomings of Baden's work, especially concerning his rejection of the JE edition, see Carr, review of *J, E, and the Redaction of the Pentateuch* (by Baden), 150-154.

[112] Alan W. Jenks, "The Elohist," *ABD* 2 (1992): 481.

[113] The reading found in MT and SP (לְמִסְפַּר בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל) is likely a theologically corrected version of לְמִסְפַּר בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים, as found in 4Q37 12:14 (בני אלוהים) and the LXX (ἀγγέλων θεοῦ).

from Deut 32:8 is restated (בְּהַפְרִידוֹ בְּנֵי אָדָם יַצֵּב גְּבֻלֹת עַמִּים), but Yahweh, instead, will inherit all of their territory (כִּי־אַתָּה תִנְחַל בְּכָל־הַגּוֹיִם; Psa 82:8), and the gods themselves perish as humans.

Unlike the Yahwist, for whom God actively interacts with and communicates to people, the Elohist has God doing so primarily through the mediation of a prophet (Gen 20:7, 17; Exo 15:20; 20:19; Num 11:25-30; 12:6ff; 21:7).[114] Each of the four main characters in the E source (Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses) are all presented as prophets who receive and interpret visions (Gen 15:1; Exo 3:4b) or dreams (Gen 28:11-12; 38:20-24). This emphasis on the prophetic office and its role as a corrective to royal authority is clearly evident in later northern works, such as the prophetic accounts from Kings (1 Kings 18-2 Kings 10) and the prophets (Hosea, Amos).[115] The psalms of Asaph are unique in the psalter for a high proportion of psalms which contain elements of prophetic speech (according to Hilber's count, 4/13),[116] which could be indicative of their origin in northern circles sympathetic to the prophetic endeavour.

Because Psalm 78 details a number of events from the Pentateuchal narratives, it is tempting to associate the various elements of the psalm with different sources of the Pentateuch. When the plagues from Psalm 78 are compared to those found in Exodus, the psalmist appears to use all seven of those found in J,[117] without using those found in P (gnats, boils), or one of E's (darkness).[118] This preference for J, generally considered a southern source, at the expense of E appears to contradict the preceding argument for the psalms of Asaph. However, when describing the plagues, the psalmist uses both a different order and different vocabulary than that found in

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[114] Nasuti, *Tradition History*, 77.

[115] Gnuse argues that the order of priority is in the other direction, with the Elohist being dependant on the prophetic works from the northern kingdom ("Northern Prophetic Traditions"). Though I would invert his dating of these two sources, he assumes that there is a direct, genealogical connection between E and other documents attributed to the north.

[116] Some earlier commentators on the role of the psalms in the cultic life of ancient Israel, such as Aubrey Johnson, assigned much of the psalter to prophetic elements in the cult. Recent studies have tempered these claims and argue for a more moderate number. John Hilber ("Cultic Prophecy," 218-226) argues that there are approximately 13 psalms that contain prophecy which functioned to legitimize royal power (Pss 2; 89; 110; 132), communicate orthodoxy or orthopraxy (50; 68; 81; 95; 132), or to address needs within the community (12; 60/108; 75; 82; 91).

[117] John Day, "How Many Pre-Exilic Psalms are There?" in *In Search of Pre-Exilic Israel*, ed. John Day (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 59. These are: blood (v. 44), frogs (v. 45), flies (v. 45), locusts (v. 46), hail (v. 47), cattle plague (v. 48), and the death of the firstborn (v. 51).

[118] Hossfeld and Zenger's comment that the pentateuchal references in Psalm 78 are "mostly P" obscures the issue (*Psalms 2*, 290). Psalm 78 unequivocally has three plagues that are not in P (flies, hail, and locusts) and avoids the two that are exclusive to P (gnats and boils).

the Pentateuch,[119] and, even if there is some dependency on the J tradition, we should not expect him to closely adhere to the vocabulary or order found in the various sources due to the poetic nature of the text. When laid out chronologically, the order is much different, with only the first and last plagues having the same chronological order from the book of Exodus (1, 4, 2, 8, 7, 5?, 10). In comparison, Psa 105 employs both J and non-J plagues, such as gnats (P; Exo 8:12-15; Psa 105:31b) and darkness (E; Exo 10:21-23; Psa 105:28), and is typically dated to the exilic period due to this connection with all three of the sources. Readers of this psalm ought to keep in mind that we do not have a coherent or complete E plague narrative from which to draw from (only portions of plagues 7, 8, and 9 are attributed to E),[120] and the structure of that document before being added to J could have read differently. Kraus also notes that the psalm adheres to the JE narrative, but contains many nuances that are not found in that combined source.[121] Among these are that the psalmist does not seem heavily concerned about enumerating the plagues, as one of them is buried in the 'B' line of another (frogs, 78:45b), and one other is potentially mixed in with the hail plague (livestock, 78:48a), nor are the specifics the same, as the frogs in Psa 78 are agents of destruction (וּצְפַרְדֵּעַ וַתַּשְׁחִיתֵם, "and frogs, which destroyed them"), rather than simply nuisances in the home (Exo 7:28).

Likewise, other references to the Pentateuch in Psalm 78 are either equivocal in their language (water from the rock; Psa 78:15-16; Exo 17:1-7 [J]; Num 21:2-13 [P]), or are J narratives (manna; see the parallels between Psa 78:21 and Num 11:1-3; 78:24, 26 and Num 11:31; and Psa 78:30 with Num 11:33). Verbal and thematic parallels with the Song of the Sea appear throughout,[122] but this text is generally ascribed to J or P. While this is not conclusive evidence for the northern provenance of this psalm, it is intriguing that a psalm intended for a northern audience would employ J narratives and poems—a source which is typically considered southern. However, given the alternating evidence for southern and northern provenance in these

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[119] Nasuti, *Tradition History*, 89.
[120] Brevard Childs, *Exodus*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974), 131, 137-138.
[121] Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 123.
[122] Michael Goulder, *The Psalms of Asaph*, 30. Goulder cites the following as parallels: the horse and the rider (Exo 15:1; Psa 76:7), the floods standing as a heap (15:8; 78:13), the floods covering the enemies (15:10; 78:53), the question of comparison among the gods (15:11; 77:14), that God is glorious "in holiness" and "doing wonders" (15:11; 77:14-15; 78:12), that God has redeemed a people (Exo 15:13; 77:16), he has "created" a people (Exo 15:16; 74:2), and that God has brought his people to his mountain sanctuary (Exo 15:17; 78:54).

psalms, perhaps the presence of J material should not be cause for concern, as part of the Documentary Hypothesis is that the J and E narratives were combined into one source at some point. Imagining this merger happening during the movement of northern refugees southward after the events of 722 BCE is entirely reasonable.

2.6.1.2 Deuteronomy, the Deuteronomic School, and Hosea

Compared to the Elohist, the Deuteronomist[123] as a northern source is more clearly on display in the psalms of Asaph, and number of different factors play into the ascription of an early version of Deuteronomy to a northern origin. This earliest portions of Deuteronomy are found in Deut 4:44-28:68, and it appears to be built as a law code (Deut 12-26) with an introduction (Deut 4:44-11:32) and conclusion (Deut 26:16-28:68). The northern site of Mt. Ebal, immediately to the north of the major northern city of Shechem, factors significantly in the conceptual geography found on the outside bounds of the Deuteronomic law code (Deut 11:25-32; 27:1-26) detailing cultic instructions to be performed at this particular site.[124] Scholarship has long noted the particular connections between Deuteronomy and the northern

[123] For clarity's sake, it is useful to define some of the terminology used in this section. Deuteronomist refers to the pentateuchal source responsible for the book of Deuteronomy and various editorial additions through the rest of the Pentateuch. Deuteronomic is the adjective employed to describe the type of text produced by this source. Deuteronomistic refers to those texts that echo the themes and language of Deuteronomy. These are particularly located in the Deuteronomistic History (Jos-2 Kings), but are also prominent in the prophecies of Jeremiah. The "Deuteronomist" refers to the supposed authorial figure beyond any given Deuteronomistic text.

[124] Remains from IA I exist on Mt. Ebal, with what appears to be an altar with an enclosed area (Adam Zertal, "Ebal," *Anchor Bible Dictionary* 2 [1992]:255-258). Though the IA I remains on Mt. Ebal do not cohere with the altar specifications in Exo 20, it is difficult to deny the location a cultic function in the early period of Israel's settlement in the land. Zertal noted a preponderance of bones (approx. 3000) from sacrificial animals such as goats, sheep, and cows, some of which were scorched or burned (Zertal, "Ebal," 257).

prophet, Hosea.[125] Both of these sources criticize worship on the mountains (Hos 4:13; Deut 12:2), as well as the proliferation of altars, pillars, and high places (Hos 8:11; 10:1; cp. Deut 12); both polemicize against idolatry (Hos 8:6; 13:2; Deut 4:28; 27:15; 28:36); both maintain a close connection between Torah and covenant (Hos 8:1; Deut *passim*); violation of that covenant has the same stock formula (Hos 6:7; 8:1; Deut 17:2); forgetting God is the ultimate rejection of him (Hos 2:15; 4:6; Deut 8:12-14; cp. Psa 81:11); and, finally, God's affection towards Israel is described as "love" (Hos 11:1-4; Deut 1:31). Though the dating of Deuteronomy's initial publication (late 7th c. BCE) follows the ministry of Hosea (mid 8th c.), much of the core of Deuteronomy may in fact be older due to its associations with Mt. Ebal.[126] In a number of instances, however, Hosea differs from Deuteronomy in ways that suggest an earlier provenance for the prophet: Hosea makes an implicit claim for Bethel as a Yahwistic sanctuary (Hos 12:4), does not espouse centralization of the cult, and takes a neutral stance on standing stones and teraphim (Hos 3:4-5). Hosea appears to be an antecedent of Deuteronomy in certain cases,[127] but the text behind Deuteronomy had older sources beyond the prophetic school. Despite the fact that it is written from the perspective of the southern kingdom, the Deuteronomistic History also

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[125] Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School* (Oxford: Claredon Press, 1972), 366-370; Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11*, 44-56; and Harold Lewis Ginsberg, *The Israelian Heritage of Judaism* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1982), 21. Ginsberg, claims that proto-Deuteronomy was written as a response to the traditions found in Hosea, as the regulation for one sanctuary (Deut 12) has verbal parallels with Hosea's detestation of the multiplicity of altars (Hos 8:13, יִזְבְּחוּ בָשָׂר וַיֹּאכֵלוּ; Deut 12:15 תִּזְבַּח וְאָכַלְתָּ בָשָׂר; Ginsberg, *Israelian Heritage,* 21). Hosea laments that sacrifice in the various cult places has merely become a feasting of meat with no religious intent, but Deuteronomy actual succeeds in separating the slaughter of animals and feasting of meat from the sanctuary. Because of the movement of these traditions to the south after the Assyrian conquest in 722 BCE, Weinfeld suggests that proto-Deuteronomy served as the ideological support for Hezekiah's centralization program (*Deuteronomy 1-11*, 47). The Deuteronomic school was unique in its call for central worship. Note that the northern prophet *par excellence*, Elijah, does not hesitate to erect an altar on Mt. Carmel and even complains about the destruction of Yahweh's altars by those who abandon the covenant (1 Kgs 19:10, 14). As Weinfeld describes, "The sin of the high places, then, is an invention of the Deuteronomist: prior to him it was entirely unknown in Israel" (Moshe Weinfeld, "Cult Centralization in Israel in the Light of a Neo-Babylonian Analogy," *JAES* 23 [1964]: 203).

[126] Sandra Richter's monograph has demonstrated that the common Deuteronomic phrase לְשַׁכֵּן שְׁמוֹ שָׁם is actually a West Semitic adaptation of a common Akkadian formula (šuma šakānu) used mainly in inscriptions indicating royal claims over newly conquered territory (Sandra Richter, *The Deuteronomistic History and the Name Theology:* lešakken šemô šam *in the Bible and the Ancient Near East*, BZAW 318 [Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002], 45-49, 199-205). She also makes a distinction between the older לְשַׁכֵּן שְׁמוֹ שָׁם and the relatively new לָשׂוּם שְׁמוֹ שָׁם, because the former is a more wooden translation of the Akkadian, while the latter was used in other NWS texts as a calque of the Akkadian term (Sandra Richter, "The Place of the Name in Deuteronomy," *VT* 57 [2007]: 344). Because this core of Deuteronomy places so much emphasis on Mt. Ebal as a cultic location—a place that does not receive such a distinction elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible—she dates Ur-Deuteronomy either to an early time in Israel's history, or as a reflection of a later memory of that history.

[127] cf. John Day, "Pre-Deuteronomic Allusions to the Covenant in Hosea and Psalm LXXVIII," *VT* 36 [1986]: 1-7.

belongs to the same tradition-historical category of Hosea and Deuteronomy due to the numerous links in theme and vocabulary.

Within this stream of tradition, the psalms of Asaph find a number of connections. The psalms of Asaph contain references to covenant (בְּרִית), which account for nearly half of the occurrences in Books I-III (Psa 50:5, 16; 74:20; 78:10, 37; cf. 81),[128] and proper behaviour within the covenant stands out as a dominant feature in the covenant liturgies of Pss 50 and 81. In Psa 76:9, God calls out from heaven in language very close to that of Deuteronomy (Psa 76:9 מִשָּׁמַיִם הִשְׁמַעְתָּ דִּין, Deut 4:36 מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם הִשְׁמִיעֲךָ אֶת־קֹלוֹ לְיַסְּרֶךָּ), and in a similar theophanic context, perhaps indicating a similar northern origin.[129] Nasuti notes a number of connections between Psa 75 and the song of Hannah in the Deuteronomistic History (1 Sam 2).[130] Though Heb. כפר appears frequently in Jerusalem-oriented, priestly literature (i.e. Lev, Num, Eze), the priest is always the subject of the verb. A particular constellation of Deuteronomic and Deuteronomistic sources have Yahweh, instead, as the subject (Deut 21:8; 32:43 [E]; Jer 18:23), and there are two such usages in the psalms of Asaph (Psa 78:38; 79:9).[131]

Psalm 78 is the psalm in the collection (and in the Psalter) most clearly connected to the Deuteronomistic school of thought.[132] The language the psalmist employs contains significant parallels from Deuteronomistic sources, including the explanation for the fall of the northern

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[128] Psalms scholarship often assigns the psalms in books IV-V to a later date because of the fluid nature of its canonical arrangement in the Second Temple period. The data from the earliest Psalms scrolls of Qumran indicate that these final two books of the Psalter were still in a state of flux with regards to their relative order. I restricted the data because these final two portions of the Psalter—in general—are post-exilic and reflect later developments on the idea of covenant that are more prevalent in later sources (cp. Pss 105:8, 10; 106:45).

[129] Nasuti, *Tradition History*, 77. In the Pentateuch, God only speaks from heaven in the E (Gen 21:17; 22:11, 15; Exo 20:22) and D (4:36) sources.

[130] Namely, he notes the following: reference lifting up a horn (Ps 75:5, 6, 11; 1 Sam 2:1, 10), the independent use of the verb רום (Psa 75:7, 8; 1 Sam 2:8), and the adjectival use of the root עתק (Psa 75:6; 1 Sam 2:3). In addition, both songs describe God's ordering of the world as establishing the "pillars of the earth" (Psa 75:4; 1 Sam 2:8), and the language of exalting the humble and humbling the proud is present in both (Psa 75:8, 11; 1 Sam 2:7). Both texts portray Yahweh as one who stands in judgment over national enemies (Psa 75:8; 1 Sam 2:10).

[131] The other instances in the Hebrew Bible are Eze 16:63, 2 Chr 30:18, and Psa 65:4. The words of 2 Chr 30:18 are spoken by King Hezekiah.

[132] John Day suggests that this psalm antedates the book of Deuteronomy, Pre-Deuteronomic Allusions," 8-12. Later in the thesis, in section 4.6, I will argue that the psalm does precede the reign of Josiah, the date of Deuteronomy's final publication.

kingdom in 2 Kgs 17:7-23.[133] In his exhaustive index of Deuteronomic language, Weinfeld notes a significant number of vocabulary parallels between Psalm 78 and the corpus of Deuteronomic literature.[134] Like the books of Judges or Kings, the people of Israel in Psa 78 continue to disobey and disregard the covenant, while God continues to extend mercy and forgiveness. By the time that the psalm ends, it becomes apparent that the psalmist is appealing for the northern tribes to accept the Davidic king and Yahweh's temple in Zion (78:67-68). However, as will be noted later,[135] the psalmist significantly omits reference to Jeroboam's secession from the united kingdom, a sin that the Deuteronomist in 1-2 Kings frequently emphasizes (e.g. 2 Kgs 17:21).

In addition to these Deuteronomic and Deuteronomistic references, parallels emerge specifically between the psalms of Asaph and the northern prophets Hosea and Amos. Both of those prophets display a heavy focus on the exodus as a defining moment in Israel's self-understanding (Hos 2:14-15; 11:1-5; 12:9, 13; 13:4; Amos 2:9-10; 4:10; 5:25; 9:7), which is a feature peculiar to the psalms of Asaph in the Psalter (Pss 77:16-21; 78:12-14, 42-53; 80-9; 81:6-8).[136] There are also a number of connection points in these psalms with the prophet Hosea, such as Yahweh breaking "bow and sword" (Hos 2:18; Psa 76:3), Yahweh as a tearing lion (Psa 50:22; Hos 5:14b; cp. Amos 1:2), Israel as a vine (Psa 80:9-17; Hos 10:1; 14:7), and reference to "slack" bows (Psa 78:57; Hos 7:16; cj. Psa 78:9).

The Ten Commandments given to Israel are primarily located in northern sources. Within the Pentateuch, the two northern sources, E and D, both have distinct accounts of when these apodictic laws were given on Mt. Horeb (Exo 20:1-8; Deut 5:1-21). In the rest of the Hebrew Bible, selections from this series of commandments appear elsewhere only in the northern

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[133] There are a number of phrases that show up in both: Psa 78:5 (וְתוֹרָה שָׂם בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה אֶת־אֲבוֹתֵינוּ) // 2 Kgs 17:13 (כְּכָל־הַתּוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִי אֶת־אֲבֹתֵיכֶם); Psa 78:22 (כִּי לֹא הֶאֱמִינוּ בֵּאלֹהִים וְלֹא בָטְחוּ בִּישׁוּעָתוֹ:) // 2 Kgs 17:14 (וַיַּקְשׁוּ אֶת־עָרְפָּם כְּעֹרֶף אֲבוֹתָם אֲשֶׁר לֹא הֶאֱמִינוּ בַּיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם:); Psa 78:59 (וימְאַס מְאֹד בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל:) // 2 Kgs 17:20 (וַיִּמְאַס יְהוָה בְּכָל־זֶרַע יִשְׂרָאֵל). Clifford also lists the significant lexemes that are common between the two texts Richard Clifford, "In Zion and David a New Beginning: An Interpretation of Psalm 78," in *Traditions and Transformation: Turning Points in Biblical Faith*, ed. Baruch Halpern and Jon Levenson (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1981), 139-140.

[134] In particular, he notes six parallels (Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School*, 365): Psa 78:8 // Deut 11:16; 21:19 (סוֹרֵר וּמֹרֶה); Psa 78:58 // Deut 4:34; 6:22; 7:19 (וַיַּקְנִיאוּהוּ … וַיְבַעִיסוּהוּ); Psa 78:43 // Deut 4:34; 6:22; 7:19; 26:8 (אֹתוֹתָיו וּמוֹפְתָיו); Psa 78:10 // 2 Kgs 10:31; Jer 9:13; 26:3 (הלך בתורת יהוה); Psa 78:7; 56 // Deut 4:2; 5:10 (נצר/שׁמר מצות יהוה); Psa 78:70 // 1 Kgs 8:16; 11:34 (בחר בדוד). Other references in the psalms of Asaph noted by Weinfeld are the verbal parallels in Psa 81:14 (בִּדְרָכַי יְהַלֵּכוּ; Deut 5:30; 10:12; 11:22; 1 Kgs 8:58) and the worship of Yahweh alone in Psa 83:19 (2 Kgs 19:15; Deut 4:35; Neh 9:6).

[135] In section 4.6.

[136] The other psalms that recount the exodus (105, 106, 135, 136) are generally regarded as late, post-exilic psalms. Note, however, the presence of exodus motifs in Pss 66 and 114.

prophet Hosea (4:1-2) and Jeremiah's Deuteronomistic prose sermon (7:9). Along with these literary prophets, the cult prophet in Psa 50:18-20 also draws on the Decalogue in his cult-prophetic rebuke of the wicked,[137] and, as with the two pentateuchal accounts, the ten words are accompanied by a summons to listen (שִׁמְעָה; Psa 50:7; cf. Deut 5:1) and divine self-identification (Psa 50:7, אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהֶיךָ אָנֹכִי; cf. Deut 5:6; Exo 20:1, אָנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ).[138] That all of these references to the Decalogue appear within sources that are otherwise regarded as northern (or in the case of Jeremiah, influenced by northern traditions) is significant, and indicates a northern preference for the prophetic tradition expressed in Psa 50.

In a number of instances throughout the pre-exilic prophets, there is a devaluing of sacrifice and ritual at the expense of proper ethical behaviour (1 Sam 15:22-23; Amos 5:21-24; Hos 6:6; Isa 1:13-16; Mic 6:7-8; Jer 7:21-23). Common to each of these prophetic indictments is the apparent aversion to sacrifice—none more damning than the deuteronomistic prophet, Jeremiah. Psalm 50 belongs within this company, but occupies the middle ground, as its critique of sacrifice has more to do with the nature of sacrifice itself—namely, that God does not consume the food offered (50:12). Although Psalm 50 later advocates for a similar ethical corrective as the prophets (50:16-21), the psalmist takes a more moderate approach by still maintaining the need for sacrifice, and charging the Israelites to "offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving (זְבַח לֵאלֹהִים תּוֹדָה)" and to fulfill their vows to the Most High (וְשַׁלֵּם לְעֶלְיוֹן נְדָרֶיךָ; Psa 50:14).[139] The impetus behind sacrifice is not that humanity would sustain God through a cultic meal, but that worshippers would thankfully respond to God when he delivers when called upon (50:15). Sacrifice is, therefore, an action in response to divine action, and the general attitude to

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[137] Psalm 50 mentions stealing (8), adultery (7), and false testimony (9); Hosea uses swearing (3?), lying (9), murder (6), stealing (8), and adultery (7); and Jeremiah evokes stealing (8), murder (6), adultery (7), swearing falsely (9), and worship of foreign gods (1). Besides the reference to the first commandment in Jeremiah, all of these prophets use the ethical commandments in the latter half of the decalogue, with adultery (7), theft (8), and false testimony (9) common to all three sources.

[138] Besides its use in the two Decalogues (Exo 20:2, 5; Deut 5:6, 9), this declaration of divine self-identification has close ties with the exodus traditions, as seen in Hosea 12:10 (אָנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם, cf. Hos 13:4), and Psa 81:11 (אָנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ הַמַּעַלְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם).

[139] *Contra* Weiser and others, this phrase is not to be understood figuratively ("thanksgiving is a sacrifice to God"), but is to maintain its cultic sense ("sacrifice to God a thanksgiving sacrifice"), Weiser, *Psalms*, 397. The context of the psalm suggests that sacrifice is about to take place (50:5). See Psa 56:13 for an explicit connection between vows, sacrifice, and thanksgiving offerings (עָלַי אֱלֹהִים נְדָרֶיךָ אֲשַׁלֵּם תּוֹדֹת לָךְ).Though this psalm still maintains the cultic value of sacrifice, the psalm that immediately follows, Psa 51, makes a figurative claim about the nature of sacrifice (51:19).

sacrifice in the ancient Near East is reversed.[140] Similarly, a number of commentators of Deuteronomy, for all of its talk of a central sanctuary, have noted its lack of legislation concerning regular sacrifice.[141] In fact, for the Deuteronomist, sacrifice essentially has two purposes: (1) humanitarian (Deut 16:11, 14; 18:1-8),[142] and (2) fulfilling regulations and vows, as a way of offering thanksgiving to God (Deut 12:6, 11, 17, 26; 23:22-24).[143] It is no longer an institutional requirement, but one that is personal and voluntary. In addition, the language of the Priestly writer concerning Yahweh's relationship to sacrifice itself (רֵיחַ־נִיחוֹחַ, *passim*; לַחְמִי, Num 28:2) is absent in Deuteronomy, where sacrifice is more connected with thanksgiving in response to God's work, than it is with describing the mechanics of sacrifice.[144] Sacrifice in Deuteronomy, as in Psa 50, is still a legitimate enterprise, but it is unconnected to the notion of feeding the divine, as may be implied in P. Both the Psalm and Deuteronomy demythologize the Priestly theology (and that of the broader culture)[145] by denying that Yahweh physically participates in the consumption of the food; and, instead, locate sacrifice as a thankful and occasional response to what Yahweh has done. Neither, however, have the strong language against sacrifice found in the prophets. Both of these texts also situate sacrifice as a response to divine action, rather than something to be performed regularly.[146]

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[140] Broyles, *Psalms*, 224.

[141] "It is indeed remarkable that the very book that promulgates the law of centralized worship at the 'chosen place' has not so much as a word to say about the presentation of communal sacrifices (the daily and seasonal offerings) that constituted the principal mode of worship at this exclusive Sanctuary" (Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11*, 41).

[142] D is unique among the pentateuchal sources in that the Levites, widows, and the fatherless—the vulnerable in society—are often included in the list of participants for a given sacrifice.

[143] Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School,* 212. Within the Pentateuch, the use of the root שׁלם with נדר—as in this psalm—is found only in Deuteronomy (23:22). This is the exact phrase found in Psa 50:14, as well as elsewhere in the psalms of Asaph (76:12).

[144] Weinfeld notes that the only verse in Deuteronomy that describes the manner in which sacrifice was to be performed makes no mention of the fat of the animal (12:27). In the Israelite cult, before the meat could be consumed by priests or laypeople, the fat piece had to be removed and set aside (1 Sam 2:15-17). The priestly writer explicitly states that this portion of fat should not be eaten (Lev 7:23-27), and Ezekiel even calls the fat "Yahweh's food" (אֶת־לַחְמִי חֵלֶב; Eze 44:7). By not including this in his description of sacrifice, the Deuteronomist displays his demythologized theology (Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School*, 212).

[145] cf. "Enuma Elish," trans. E.A. Speiser (ANET 68-69); and "The Epic of Gilgamesh," trans. E.A. Speiser (ANET 99).

[146] Perhaps further strengthening the connection between Deuteronomy and Psalm 50 is that, in contrast to P's silent worship, Deuteronomy prescribes the recitation of prayer in ritual contexts (21:8; 26:3b-10a, 13-15; Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School*, 32).

2.6.2 Southern Tradition History

2.6.2.1 Zion and Songs of Zion

Zion is a term used to refer to a number of different institutions within the environs of Jerusalem. From its first mention in the Hebrew Bible, it seems that the name was employed by the Canaanites and referred specifically to the small southeastern hill of Jerusalem, commonly known as "the city of David" but also מְצָדַת צִיּוֹן, "the fortress of Zion," (2 Sam 5:7). Once the city came into Israel's possession, Zion became a catchword for the city of Jerusalem and its later expansions, or, more typically, a specific reference to the temple in that city. As such, the name Zion carries a distinctly religious flair within a southern environment. Statements within the psalms of Asaph, such as the petition in Psa 74:2 for Yahweh to remember "Mount Zion, where you have dwelt," are therefore only applicable in a southern setting. In fact, the notion of God "dwelling" in Zion is found in clearly Judahite settings (Isa 8:18; Joel 4:17, 21; Psa 135:21) with the exact lexeme for "dwelling" (שׁכן) as found in Psa 74:2.

The traditions surrounding Zion occur frequently in the Psalter.[147] Within the royal psalms, Zion is highly esteemed in connection with the Davidic dynasty (2:6; 20:2; 110:2; 132:13; cf. 78:68-72), but there are a number of hymns which specifically focus on the location of Zion as the divine residence—the "Songs of Zion" (46, 48, 76, 84, 87, 122, 132). After David's conquest of the city of Jerusalem, two new and inextricably linked traditions came into existence: the election of the Davidic line (2 Sam 7), and the election of Zion as God's dwelling (Psa 78:68)—one political, and the other religious. The Royal psalms and the Songs of Zion are parallel hymnic traditions that reflect these two ideals—the symbol of Zion communicates Yahweh's own enthronement through the image of the Judahite king undergoing the same ceremony.[148] This is portrayed most clearly in Psa 89, where Yahweh's kingship (89:5-18) is the basis for the Davidic

[147] The lexeme "Zion" appears 38 times in the book of Psalms and often the context is festal. Among other instances, seven references are found in the songs of "steps" (125:1; 126:1; 128:5; 129:5; 132:13; 133:3; 134:3), seven in the Songs of Zion (Psa 48:3, 12, 13; 76:3; 84:8; 87:2, 5), two in enthronement psalms (97:8; 99:2), and two in psalms for the autumnal festival (50:2; 65:2).

[148] Robert D. Miller II, "The Origin of the Zion Psalms," in *The Composition of the Book of Psalms*, ed. Erich Zenger (Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 673.

line's rule (89:19-51). Though divine kingship and enthronement are themes found in exilic prophetic literature,[149] both the royal psalms and the songs of Zion serve to draw tight connections between the surety of the Davidic throne and Yahweh's reign from his throne on Zion (Psa 89:27-28).[150]

After Jeroboam had rejected the election of the Davidic line in his split from the southern kingdom, he also instituted places of worship that rejected the idea that Yahweh had chosen Zion as his exclusive residence (Bethel and Dan; 1 Kgs 12:28-29). Both of these moves appear to have been, in part, motivated by an appeal to Israel's ancient traditions, with the political capitals located in Shechem and Penuel (1 Kgs 12:25), both important sites for the patriarch Jacob (Shechem: Gen 33:18-20; 35:1-4; Penuel: 32:26-32), and at least one of the national cultic locations established at an important shrine for Jacob, Bethel (Gen 28:10-22; 35:9-15). These decisions to define the northern kingdom based on northern aspects of their formative past stand in contrast to the novelty of the David and Zion traditions. Such a move by Jeroboam renders the appeal in Psalm 78 all the more striking, as it is precisely on these two issues that the psalmist appeals to his northern audience.

Songs of Zion are often assigned as a specific subset within the form-critical category of hymns, to which Hermann Gunkel artificially gave the name "Songs of Zion," based on the presence of such a term in Psa 137:3.[151] Each of these hymns speaks highly of the city itself and has a special concern for extolling the sacred space of Yahweh's temple ("How lovely is your

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[149] Especially as it is found in Deutero-Isaiah (Isa 40:1-11; 52:7-10; 55:12-13). Gunkel supposed that the enthronement psalms were post-exilic liturgical renderings of these themes found in the Isaianic material. One of his assumptions for this progression of thought was the now outdated idea that the prophets represented the original religious thought of ancient Israel, and cultic or legal manifestations of that thought are later. There is no reason to presuppose such an ordering, as Deutero-Isaiah draws freely from a number of different genres within the Psalms (see Craig Broyles, "The Citations of Yahweh in Isaiah 44:26-28," in *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretive Tradition*, ed. Craig C. Broyles and Craig A. Evans, Two Volumes [Leiden: Brill, 1997], 399).

[150] Miller, "The Origin," 674.

[151] Hermann Gunkel, *Introduction to the Psalms: The Genres of the Religious Lyric of Israel*, comp. Joachim Begrich, trans. James D. Nogalski (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1998), 56. According to Martin Buss ("Psalms of Asaph and Korah," 387), the taunt of the Babylonians in Ps 137:2 evidences a pre-exile date for the songs of Zion, כִּי שָׁם שְׁאֵלוּנוּ שׁוֹבֵינוּ דִּבְרֵי־שִׁיר וְתוֹלָלֵינוּ שִׂמְחָה שִׁירוּ לָנוּ מִשִּׁיר צִיּוֹן, "For there our captors asked for the words of a song, and our tormentors, 'Sing us a song of Zion!'" However, Gunkel's designation of this genre with such a term has nothing to do with the identity of such psalms in the exilic period. A "שִׁיר צִיּוֹן" could just as well be translated "a song that comes from Zion" and so has no appreciable value for an Israelite definition of such a genre.

dwelling place, O Yahweh of Hosts!" Psa 84:2).[152] The six or seven exemplars (46, 48, 76, 84, 87, 122, 132:13-18) can further be divided according to those that highlight the inviolability of Zion (46, 48,[153] 76; cf. 132:13-18) and those that appear to have a pilgrimage-specific *Sitz im Leben* (84, 87, 122). Additionally, Pss 46, 48, and 76 are not just marked by references to Yahweh's strength in Zion, but also share a number of formal similarities.[154] Within the Asaph psalms, there is not a large percentage of references to Zion, which has prompted Goulder, in his reconstruction of a Bethel liturgy on the basis of the psalms of Asaph, to posit a southern redactional insertion of Zion into the text.[155] One of the ways in which this hypothesis fails is that the idea of Zion is inseparably linked to the content of at least Pss 76 and 78. Notably, the presence of a Psalm of Asaph (76) within a generic collection of psalms (46 and 48) that highlight the impenetrable nature of Jerusalem is remarkable. Besides the number of references to Zion within this corpus, the unmistakable form-critical designation of this psalm within a genre glorifying the southern capital is striking, especially given the relative prominence of northern elements elsewhere in the psalms of Asaph. Though the specific implications of the Songs of Zion in the Asaphite collection will be further explored in later portions of this thesis, suffice it to say that Pss 76 and 78 are key psalms for determining the relationship between the northern and southern voices within the Asaphite collection.[156]

2.6.2.2 Lamentations

The opening summons of the Asaphite Psalm 50 goes so far as to say that Jerusalem is "the perfection of beauty" (מְכְלַל־יֹפִי)—a description of Jerusalem later referenced in Lamentations 2:15. As the Lamenter quotes the bygone praises of Jerusalem on the lips of a stunned passersby,

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[152] Also, unlike most expressions of hymns in the Hebrew Bible, these Songs of Zion do not contain an opening summons to praise (Gunkel, *Introduction to the Psalms*, 56).

[153] Psalm 48 blends the two of these categories, and defies precise assignment.

[154] Jörg Jeremias finds three syntactic features that stand 46, 48, and 76 apart as Songs of Zion: 1) at the beginning are confession-like or emphatic statements in the form of predicate nominatives (נוֹדָע בִּיהוּדָה אֱלֹהִים, "In Judah, God is known") where Yahweh is described as Zion's protector, or Zion is described as a splendid fortress fortified by Yahweh; 2) these static statements are then substantiated with sentences in the perfect tense (שָׁמָּה שִׁבַּר רִשְׁפֵּי־קָשֶׁת "There he broke the fiery arrows"); 3) in conclusion, consequences are then communicated in imperative forms, which are preceded by jussive forms and could enjoin people to worship Yahweh (46:8a, 10), join in a festal procession (48:12ff) or to perform their vows (76:10ff). This synopsis of Jeremias' findings was found in Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 459-460.

[155] Goulder, *Psalms of Asaph*, 26.

[156] See sections 4.4.5 and 4.4.6.

he does so by including quotations of the city's former glory, "'Is this the city that was called "the perfection of beauty" (=Psa 50:2), "the joy of all the earth" (=Psa 48:3)?'" It seems that both Psa 48, a Song of Zion, and Psa 50 employed high praises for the city of Jerusalem that had become established tropes by the time of the temple's destruction. It could be that Psa 50 was using an existing image from a broader tradition that is only manifest in these two locations in the Hebrew Bible, but the fact remains that a proverbial praise of Jerusalem is found in this psalm. The southern features of the text, therefore, are much more layered and complex than simply references to "Jerusalem" or "Zion."

2.6.2.3 Yahweh's Ark

The ark of the covenant[157] occupied an important role in Israel's cult for much of its history. The earliest descriptions of the purpose for the ark of the covenant are in the context of holy war and ritual conquest (Num 10:35-36, J), where the ark would move out with Israel as they went to battle, and would represent Yahweh's warrior presence among Israel's armies.[158] After journeying with the Israelites through the wilderness, and having a colourful history in the pre-monarchic era, the cherub ark ended up situated in the temple of Jerusalem. Though he would not actually build the temple, David still brought up the ark to the city of Jerusalem, which—as far as is known—was where it remained until its disappearance from the written record. This ark, though previously connected with the northern sanctuary of Shiloh (1 Sam 3–6), took up permanent residence in Jerusalem (2 Sam 6:1-15). This was certainly, in part, a political act by David, as he sought to establish Jerusalem as the religious capital of Israel instead

[157] Different names are attached to this cultic vessel depending on the perspective of the author. For early sources, such as J and E, the ark is the footstool of Yahweh and represents his physical presence in war. Others, like D and P, the ark is a stationary object that contains various objects that contribute to the agenda of each source (the tablets of the covenant, D; Aaron's budding staff, P). The name "ark of the covenant" is a decidedly Deuteronomic turn of phrase, but it will be adopted here for convenience's sake to refer to the ark across its varied historical expressions.

[158] Frank Moore Cross, in *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 99-104, notes a number of archaic Hebrew texts that ritualize Yahweh's conquests (Exo 15:13-18; Deut 33:2-3; Jud 5:4-5; Psa 24:7-10; 68:18; Hab 3:3-6). Though they do not explicitly reference the ark, it is reasonable to draw a connection between these ritual texts and a cultic object for when they were performed, especially when their religious significance centres on a similar theme of conquest

of Shiloh, the ark's older home.[159] Most of the references to the ark in the Hebrew Bible reflect this later stage of the ark's movement, and are most appropriate for a southern setting in Jerusalem.[160]

Within the Psalter, there are a number of explicit and implicit references to the ark of the covenant and its sacral role in Jerusalem's temple.[161] Though the only explicit mention is found in Psa 132:8, there are a number of factors that could determine whether a psalm echoes a cultic setting around the ark.[162] Of the psalms of Asaph, Psa 80 stands out with a constellation of these terms: the psalmist employs the usual epithet for Yahweh in conjunction with the ark ("Yahweh of Hosts," Psa 80:5; "God of Hosts," Psa 80:8, 15, 20; cf. 2 Sam 6:2),[163] Yahweh is enthroned upon the cherubim (80:2; cf. 1 Sam 4:4), Yahweh is called upon to exercise his "strength" against his foes (80:3), and the psalmist draws on imagery from the exodus, wilderness, and conquest periods (80:9-12). Hezekiah's prayer in 2 Kgs 19:14-19 shares many of these verbal connections with Psa 80, and that prayer is stated to have been performed before the ark in Jerusalem (2 Kgs 19:14). Additionally, Psalm 74:22 and 82:8 may also contain imagery of the ark in the psalmist's appeal that God "arise" (קוּמָה אֱלֹהִים). Similar to the song of the ark in Num 10:35-36, these two appeals from the Asaphite collection implore God to come in conquest and to judge and defeat his enemies. From an early stage in Israel's history, the verb קום was associated with the

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[159] The very choice of Jerusalem as David's capital, rather than Hebron (2 Sam 5:5), was a gambit to appease northern detractors of the united kingdom. Jerusalem was on the border of Benjamin and Judah, though on the Benjaminite side (Josh 15:8), and remained in Jebusite hands through the reign of Saul. By conquering Jerusalem, David could reign in a city that did not have a history as a northern or southern settlement and occupied a middle geographic position between the two.

[160] That the ark does not appear in the Deuteronomistic history after its deposition in the temple likely stems from the attitude towards the ark taken by that school of thought. In Deuteronomy, the ark is simply a box to house the tablets of the covenant (10:2, 5; cp. 1 Kgs 8:9), and the ark never leaves its position in the holy of holies (1 Kgs 8:8). 2 Chronicles 35:3, a source less interested in keeping the ark stationary, seems to imply that it was not until the reign of Josiah that the ark took up its permanent, unmoved position from this location.

[161] Craig Broyles, "The Psalms and Cult Symbolism: The Case of the Cherubim Ark," in *Interpreting the Pslams: Issues and Approaches*, ed. Philip Johnston and David G. Firth (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2005). Apart from the explicit reference to the ark in Psalm 132, Broyles sees allusions to the ark in other psalms (24, 36, 47, 57, 61, 63, 68, 78, 80, 89, 96, 97, 99, 105, 132).

[162] For a discussion and criteria for determining a reference to the ark, see Broyles, "The Psalms and Cult Symbolism," 145-156.

[163] This title of Yahweh is conspicuous in the psalms of Zion (46:7, 11; 48:8; 84:1, 3, 8, 12). Elsewhere in the Psalms, it is found in a royal psalm (89), a temple entrance liturgy (24), and two individual laments (59, 69). This name for Yahweh is first attested in conjunction with the ark (1 Sam 1:3, 11) and is a shortened form of the full title "The Lord of Hosts who is enthroned upon the cherubim" (cf. 2 Sam 6:2). It is predominately found connected with traditions centred around the Jerusalem temple, such as First Isaiah (56x), Haggai (14x), Zechariah (53x), Malachi (24x), and Psalms (15x). The prophet Isaiah accounts for nearly a quarter of all of the references to the "Lord of Hosts."

movement of Yahweh's presence, symbolized in the ark, towards his enemies in battle (Num 10:35-36, קוּמָה יְהוָה וְיָפֻצוּ אֹיְבֶיךָ, "Arise Yahweh, that your foes may scatter"). Adoption of this language from Numbers, as well as the physical taking up of the ark as a symbol of God's march of conquest in a ritual setting within the Jerusalem cultus, is best seen in Psa 68.[164] The ark, therefore, was not simply used in Israel's physical battles, but also played a large role in the Jerusalem cult (cf. Psa 24:7-10). If cultic activity, including prayer before the ark was as common as Broyles' numbers indicate (he notes 15 such psalms), then perhaps the common supplication that Yahweh "arise" to do violence to his enemies or preside in judgment over them ought to be associated with prayer before the ark and imply that Yahweh should once more "arise" with his ark to conquer his foes (3:7; 7:6; 9:19; 10:12; 17:13; 35:2; 44:26; 74:22; 82:8). Because the ark had taken up permanent residence in the cultus at Jerusalem, these references to traditions related to the ark of the covenant within the psalms of Asaph locate these psalms to a southern, rather than northern, source.

2.6.2.4 Micah

Two of the communal laments in this group (74 and 79) lament a military defeat of Jerusalem, which likely would have been at the hands of the Babylonians. One of these laments describes Jerusalem "in ruins" (עִיִּין; Psa 79:1), which is the same lexeme used in Micah's prophecies on the destruction of Samaria (1:6) and Jerusalem (3:12). By itself, this lexical connection between these psalms of Asaph and a southern prophet is not significant, but Micah's predication of Jerusalem "in ruins" is later quoted by supporters of Jeremiah, the elders of the land (Jer 26:17). Upon quoting this message from Micah, the elders of the land in Jeremiah note that the destruction promised was averted because of Hezekiah's entreaty (26:19). Clearly, then, this prophecy was authentic to Micah, could be dated to the late 8th c. BCE, and obtained a wide currency among Deuteronomistic circles of the late pre-exilic period. Its presence in the late pre-exilic book of Jeremiah shows at least a relationship between this word and prophetic understandings of Jerusalem's potential fate. The same word is also used in the temple dedication

[164] Broyles, "The Psalms and Cult Symbolism," 148-149. Broyles notes seven allusions to the ark within Psa 68.

to describe the fate of the temple if the people transgress the covenant (cf. 1 Kgs 9:8; 2 Chr 7:21).[165] Its inclusion in the city lament of Psa 79 perhaps indicates a familiarity with popular traditions concerning the potential fate of the southern capital.

The book of Micah is an interesting case for assigning provenance in that its geographic setting is in Judah, but its social location is a rural setting, which puts it at odds with the dominant Zion theology in Jerusalem (Mic 3:9-12). Stephen Cook would associate the prophet behind this book with certain tradents in the northern kingdom who would fit into a diffuse northern and southern ideology, which he labels "Biblical Yahwism."[166] Though not a comprehensive argument, the influence of Micah in the psalms of Asaph appears to be restricted to the laments for the destruction of the Jerusalem temple—a setting where Micah's prophecies interacted with other tradition groups, such as the Jeremianic circles. It may be best to ascribe the Micah tradition to a third position, rural Judahite, rather than associating it with either northern tradents or those in Jerusalem.

2.6.2.5 First Isaiah

In the proto-Isaianic corpus, Yahweh is frequently designated as the "Holy One of Israel" (קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל; found 25x in First Isaiah). Apart from this book, the title is relatively infrequent, occurring twice in Jeremiah (Jer 50:29; 51:5), three times in the Psalms (Psa 71:22; 78:41; 89:19), and once in Isaiah's oracle in 2 Kings (19:22).[167] The two uses in Jeremiah are both in judgment oracles against Babylon, and appear to be drawing from the oracles against Assyria in First Isaiah (esp. Jer 51:5 and Isa 37:23//2 Kgs 19:22). One of the Psalms (89) is a royal psalm for the Davidic king, so a title used predominately among Jerusalem prophets ought to be expected. Given the pro-Zion ideology expressed in Psalm 78, it is not surprising that a

[165] For both of these verses in Kings and Chronicles, the MT has עֶלְיוֹן, which should be corrected to עִיִּין. Compare the Syriac in 1 Kgs 9:8 (And this house will be desolate .ܒܝܬܐ ܗܕܐ ܕܗܘܐ ܪܡܐ ܗܘ ܐܬܪ) and the double reading found in Targum Jonathan of the same verse (And this temple that was most high will be ruined, וְבֵיתָא הָדֵין דַּהֲוָה עִלַּאי יְהֵי חָרוּב)

[166] Stephen Cook, *The Social Roots of Biblical Yahwism*, SBL 8 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004).

[167] One reference in Hosea 11:9 could be added to this, though the noun "Israel" is not connected with it.

parallel with First Isaiah should appear. As with other references in First Isaiah, the "Holy One of Israel" in Psa 78:41 is the object of faithless rejection by Israel.[168]

In his analysis of the tradition history of Asaph, Nasuti found that, though the image of Israel as a vine is echoed in other Ephraimite sources (Hos 10:1; 14:7; Jer 2:21; cf. Psa 44:3),[169] the viticulture image in Psalm 80 shifts from the vine itself to a walled vineyard. Like the other examples, the metaphor in Psalm 80 describes Israel as a vine (גֶּפֶן) that was planted (נָטַע) in the land, but when the fortunes of this vine change, the psalmist begins to describe the vine instead in language similar to the vineyard (כֶּרֶם) parable in First Isaiah (Isa 5:1-7). Specifically, there is a close description of the destruction of this vineyard (Isa 5:5, פָּרֹץ גְּדֵרוֹ; Psa 80:13, פָּרַצְתָּ גְדֵרֶיהָ). This verbal parallel is interesting, but the two phrases differ in gender according to the image they employ, with Psa 80:13 indicating the feminine גֶּפֶן rather than the masculine כֶּרֶם found in Isaiah's parable. In both cases, the focus has shifted to the vineyard's wall (גָּדֵר, "stone wall"), and away from the vine itself. This blending of a northern image (vine) with a southern image (vineyard) in Psa 80, may contribute to the description of the tradition history of these psalms and their mixed provenance.

As part of the prophet address in the liturgy of Psalm 81, Yahweh reminds the tribe of Joseph that he "relieved his shoulder of the burden (הֲסִירוֹתִי מִסֶּבֶל שִׁכְמוֹ, Psa 81:7)." Curiously, this turn of phrase is not found in the book of Exodus, or in extant exodus traditions, but has three verbal parallels in First Isaiah (Isa 9:3; 10:27; 14:25), each of which mentions Assyrian, not Egyptian, oppression.[170] Two of these references in Isaiah mention the "yoke" of Assyria nearby, and, if Peter Machinist's suspicion is correct in assigning this image to an Assyrian provenance,[171] the rarity of the phrase "relieving the shoulder of the burden" could be explained

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[168] In First Isaiah, the "Holy One of Israel" is often the object of scorn, either by the people of Judah (Isa 1:4; 5:24; 30:11; 31:1), or its enemies (Isa 10:17; 37:23), while Second Isaiah often has the title in apposition to "Redeemer" (41:14; 43:14; 47:4; 49:7; 54:5). At the risk of over-simplifying, it appears that Yahweh's holiness is the basis of judgment in the pre-exilic period, but it becomes the basis of his salvation in the post-exilic. In his commentary on Hosea, Hans Walter Wolff observes that "it is not until the prophecy of Deutero-Isaiah that the uniqueness of Yahweh's saving restoration of this despondent people is said to be founded upon his holiness," *Hosea: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Hosea*, Hermenia, trans. Gary Stansell (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1974), 202.

[169] Nasuti, *Tradition History*, 88-89.

[170] In each of these examples, the words שְׁכֶם and סֶבֶל/סֹבֶל are used together, and, apart from one reference in 1 Kgs 11:28, these are all of the attested uses of this word. In three of these cases (Psa 81:6; Isa 10:27; 14:25), the verb סור is employed.

[171] Peter Machinist, "Assyria and its Image in First Isaiah," *JAOS* 103 (1983): 728-729.

in reference to Assyrian ideology. Elsewhere, Oreb and Midian, though minor figures in the book of Judges, are given reference as enemies of God's people only in First Isaiah (9:3; 10:26), and a psalm of Asaph (83:10, 12).

2.7 Summary

At this point in the argument, it is worth stopping to take stock of the evidence accumulated so far and how it can contribute to a single, working hypothesis regarding the historical and social location of the psalms of Asaph. In both their superscriptions and themes, the psalms of Asaph exhibit a fundamental unity. Because of this, these psalms can be read in concert with each other and the contextual background of each contributes to the broader reconstruction of the whole. These elements of unity indicate that the collection belongs to the same tradition group, and so their points of difference amount to variations within a common stream of thought. Beyond these description of the psalms of Asaph as a whole, I examined the ways in which these psalms exhibit characteristics typical of provenance within northern and southern spheres. Next, it was shown that despite the arguments put forward for a distinctly northern character of the language, there is insufficient evidence to suggest that the psalms of Asaph were written in a different dialect than the Judahite representation of Classical Biblical Hebrew.

References to Jerusalem and its environs certainly do not dominate these psalms, but the very presence of Jerusalem along with the geographic evidence from northern Israel provokes a number of questions as to their relationship. Of the evidence observed, the only geographical feature from the south is the city of Jerusalem, while a number of geographic images emerge from the north. Contrary to other approaches that would see these competing voices as contradictory and incompatible, these differences amidst the Asaphite corpus do not indicate two distinct spheres of composition—one southern and one northern—but indicate that the psalmists are northerners living in and around the city of Jerusalem. The constellation of geographical references presented above would not, therefore, indicate a mixed provenance for the twelve psalms, but a provenance from a particular group of tradents who had a familiarity with both locales.

As was the case with southern geographic references, the tradition-history of the psalms indicates that the liturgists behind the psalms of Asaph were acquainted with southern traditions. These psalmists were not restricted to their own traditions when crafting their liturgies, but incorporated the traditions of both north and south in their compositional process. They were familiar with other terminology, and were capable of referencing it in their work.[172] The range of Judahite sources from which this material emanates invalidates those proposals that the Jerusalem flavour of these psalms is due to an editor's hand, without interaction from northern tradents. Simply cutting out the links to southern traditions and geography and labelling them as insertions robs these psalmists of their ability to communicate their message in unique and creative ways.

Therefore, these psalms are a definable collection based on their common superscription and parallel themes, and represent a mixed northern and southern composition, based on their geographic and tradition-history references. These two points—that the psalms of a Asaph represent a tradition group, and that the group displays a mixed provenance—emerge as the two most salient issues to account for in the historical reconstruction that follows.

[172] Nasuti, *Tradition History*, 88.

Chapter 3: Socio-Historical Settings for the Psalms of Asaph

3.1 Introduction

Given the preceding conclusions concerning provenance, is there a particular era in Israel's history that best accounts for the genealogical complexities put forward by the psalms of Asaph? Analyzing the geography and various traditions of ancient Israel certainly has its merits for defining the northern source of these psalms, but these data cannot be determining factors in dating the texts that contain those sources—a chronological synchronism does not necessarily exist between two texts that outline a similar tradition, and certainly does not exist with the representation of certain natural phenomena. If the various manifestations of a given tradition from within a definable geographic context can be supplemented by evidence from the realms of history and material culture, a case can be made for an historical location.

The following discussion will centre on one recurring theme in this corpus: the intertwined northern and southern features. Instead of a problem to explain away, I will argue, instead, that this peculiar trait of the Asaphite collection is its most telling indicator of historical circumstance. In large measure, the two kingdoms enjoyed a separate existence of political and religious practice, but it was in the late pre-exilic period, beginning with Hezekiah, that there was a sort of reunion between the northern and southern kingdoms. The range of dates in Israel and Judah's history where this confluence of material is most appropriate lies between the fall of the northern kingdom to the time of the Babylonian exile. In order to substantiate this proposal, I will examine both the historical and archaeological record, as well as contemporary literature around the turn of the 7th c. BCE, in order to provide a backdrop for this proposal. By introducing this historical context, I hope to answer the question of *when* these psalms were composed.

3.2 The Fall of the North and the Refugee Crisis of 722 BCE

For most of Israel's independent political existence (ca. 1200-750), there were no large, foreign powers directly competing for their territory. In this time, local entities, such as Moab, Philistia, and Phoenicia vied for control over relatively small tracts of land in the southern

Levant. This period of regional rule came to an abrupt end with the rise of the Assyrian empire in the 8th c. BCE.[1] From the middle of the 8th c. BCE until the end of that century, the Assyrian empire quickly spread its influence into Western Asia. As the organized and ruthless Assyrian war machine rolled through the area, the disparate city states and small polities of the Levant proved to be no match for Assyria. These lands beyond the Euphrates were coveted by the Assyrians for their timber and mineral resources, but most importantly because of the access they provided to the granaries and gold mines of Egypt.[2] The nations of Israel and Judah, without abundant timber or metals, were merely stops on the way to this goal. After the strong leadership of Jeroboam II,[3] Israel's monarchy descended into various dynastic struggles that incapacitated the nation (2 Kgs 15:8-28). By 742 BCE, Israel already appears to be a vassal to Assyria, with "Menahem, the Samarian" sending tribute to Calah.[4] In 733 BCE, during the days of Pekah, king of Israel, and in response to the rebellion of Aram and Israel against Assyrian rule, Tiglath-Pileser III marched through the Huleh basin, Galilee, and Transjordan (2 Kgs 15:29; cf. Isa 9:1-2),[5] reinstating Israel's position as a vassal state to Assyria. After Pekah's successor, Hoshea, attempted to switch allegiances to the Egyptians (2 Kgs 17:1-5), Tiglath-Pileser III's son, Sargon

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[1] The Assyrians made a number of notable forays into the area under various kings, but none of these established lasting imperial rule over the conquered territories. Shalmeneser III (859-824 BCE) campaigned a number of times to the southern Levant, one of which (853 BCE) was the catalyst for a Levantine coalition's defence at Qarqar, with both Ahab's army and chariotry a significant force ("Kurkh Monolith," trans. K. Lawson Younger, COS 2.113A:261-264). Later in Shalmeneser III's reign, in a campaign recorded in the famous "Black Obelisk," he conquered Damascus and went as far as Mt. Carmel (Anson Rainey and Steven R. Notley, *The Sacred Bridge: Carta's Atlas of the Biblical World* [Carta: Jerusalem, 2006], 208). Northern Israel clearly lies on the path from Damascus to Carmel, and on this stele, Jehu, king of Israel (841-815 BCE), is depicted performing obeisance towards the king of Assyria. Following this king, Assyrian interests largely retreated to issues closer to northern Mesopotamia, with one notable exception (Marc van der Mieroop, *A History of the Ancient Near East, ca. 3000-323 BCE*, 2nd ed. [Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007], 244-245). In 796, Adad-Nirari campaigned in Syria, subdued Damascus, and took tribute from a number of Levantine states (Israel, Tyre, and Sidon; Rainey and Notley, *Sacred Bridge,*215). After this campaign, it was not until Tiglath-Pileser III in 733 BCE that the Assyrians moved past Damascus into the land of ancient Israel.

[2] John Bright, *A History of Israel*, 3rd ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1981), 270.

[3] Much of the success that Jeroboam II and his southern contemporary, Uzziah, achieved is due to the geo-political vacuum produced by Adad-Nirari when he conquered Damascus in 796 BCE. With both Damascus and Assyria out of the picture, Jeroboam could "restore the border from Lebo-hamath as far as the Sea of the Arabah" (2 Kgs 14:25), and Uzziah could extend his influence to the coast as well as to the trade routes through the Negev (2 Kgs 14:22; 2 Chr 26:5-8).

[4] "The Calaḫ Annals," trans. K. Lawson Younger, COS 2.117A:284-286; Rainey and Notley, *The Sacred Bridge*, 226.

[5] "Summary Inscription 4," trans. K. Lawson Younger, COS 2.117C:287-290.

II, besieged Samaria, conquered the Northern Kingdom in 722 BCE, and led off a remnant in exile to Mesopotamia (2 Kgs 17:6).[6]

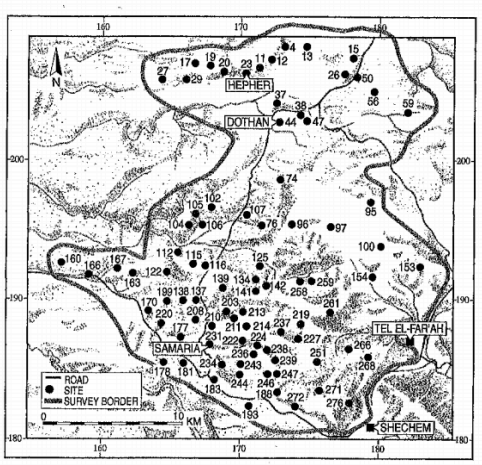

Fig. 14. The Distribution of Iron Age II Sites (the Kingdom of Israel) in the Region of Samaria. Site numbers are from Manasseh Survey, vol. 1.

According to Sargon II, the number of exiles taken away was an exaggerated 27,000, which, even if accurate, Adam Zertal suggests is representative of only a quarter of the 60-70,000 residents of the northern kingdom.[7] In his archaeological survey of the territory of Manasseh, Zertal noted that the number of settlements in the area declined from approximately 223 before Sargon II to 73 afterwards, which amounts to a difference of 68%.[8] In the accompanying figures, the relative distribution of sites is charted on a map of the survey area, with the upper figure representing pre-Sargon II (IA II) and the lower figure post-Sargon II (IA III).[9] His hypothesis for this difference in settlement is to attribute much of it to the deportations carried out by Assyria under various kings (2 Kgs 17:24; Ezra 4:2). However, if we take seriously the nature of Assyria's policy of double deportation,[10] those Israelites who were exiled would have been replaced with foreigners. Even if we do not suppose a correspondence between an Israelite sent and a foreigner imported to be 1:1, it is difficult to imagine such a stark contrast in settlement patterns if double deportation was practised. It would be better to suppose that many of the residents of this area fled as refugees to regions that did not suffer as much from the conflicts with Assyria. When

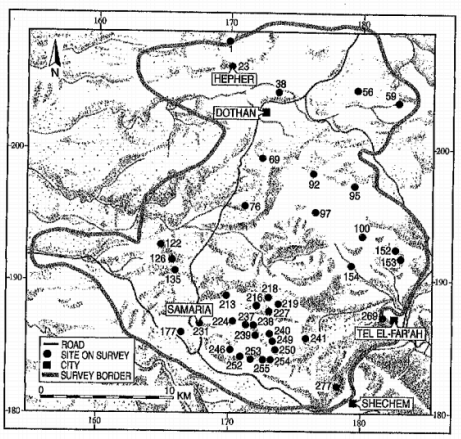

Fig. 15. The Distribution of Iron Age III Sites (the Province of Samerina) in the Region of Samaria. Site numbers are from Manasseh Survey, vol. 1.

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[6] Shalmeneser V likely began the three year siege, but did not see it through to completion. For a discussion on the historical issues surrounding the fall of Samaria, see Nadav Na'aman, "The Historical Background to the Conquest of Samaria (720 BCE)," *Biblica* 71 (1990): 206-225.

[7] Adam Zertal, "The Province of Samaria in the Late Iron Age," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 385.

[8] Zertal, "The Province of Samaria," 402. For a gazetteer on the broader scale destruction in the northern kingdom of Israel, see the survey by Faust (Avraham Faust, "Settlement, Economy," 765-789). In this work, Faust lists every excavated site in the northern kingdom that has a settlement history in the eight century (42 in total). His conclusions are bleak, and suggest that much of the settled territory was destroyed and not rebuilt.

[9] These two figures are taken from Zertal, "The Province of Samaria," 402-403.

[10] As outlined in van der Mieroop, *A History of the Ancient Near East*, 231-233.

analyzing the same data, Avraham Faust suggests that the change in settlement history is largely due to the standard demographic effects of war: death, epidemics, famine, executions following sieges, and flights to other regions.[11] Though any of these fates is tragic in their own right, the last of these will now receive some attention.[12]

Undoubtedly, many of the remaining Israelites fled south to their Judean neighbours in order to avoid both the hardships of remaining under Assyrian hegemony and the costs of repairing after the conquest.[13] There are, however, no direct textual references to this displacement into Jerusalem, so it is fortunate that, in this case, archaeology is able to provide some of the missing pieces.[14] The city of Jerusalem since the time of Solomon had only included the temple mount and the hill directly south, bounded by the Kidron and Tyropean valleys—an area of about 32 acres. During Hezekiah's reign, the wall was dramatically expanded across the western hill to the edge of the Valley of Ben Hinnom, increasing the area of the city by about 125 acres. Evidence from Avigad's discovery of the Broad Wall and the movement of tombs both west of the Valley of Ben Hinnom and north to the present day Damascus gate—both outside of

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[11] Faust, "Settlement, Economy," 777.

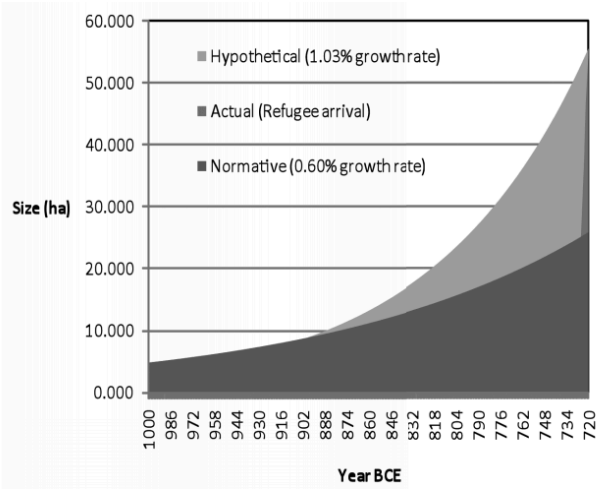
[12] Some of the refugees from this area around Samaria could have ended up in Jerusalem, but their place of refuge would only have to be a site that would provide the economic and social prospects that were lost with the destruction of Samaria. One site, in particular, that is close to this region is Megiddo. Megiddo was the only site that the Assyrians bothered to rebuild, as it served as the regional capital for the province of *Magiddu* (Ephraim Stern, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible: The Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Periods 732-332 BCE* [New York: Doubleday, 2001], 48). The area around Tell Gezer and modern Rosh Ha-ʿAyin also experienced a renaissance during the Neo-Assyrian period, due to its proximity to the international coastal highway (Faust, "Settlement, Economy," 781).

[13] Exiles from the north made their way to much further places than Jerusalem. A papyrus from Egypt, Papyrus Amherst 63, contains a number of texts that indicate a northern Israelite origin. The community, comprised of Syrians, Babylonians, and these Israelites, that the collection of texts represents had taken up residence in Egypt, perhaps as mercenaries (Karel van der Toorn, ed., *Papyrus Amherst 63*, AOAT 448 [Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2018], 6-13). Before making their way to Egypt, it appears that they first found themselves in Palmyra, in northeastern Syria. Karel van der Toorn suggests that this resulted from the turmoil experienced in the southern levant at the end of 8th c. BCE, and that these communities of refugees merged with each other in Palmyra before taking on the role as mercenaries in Egypt (van der Toorn, *Papyrus Amherst 63*, 205). One text appears to be a narrative from the perspective of a guard in the city of Palymra, who witnesses a group of Samarians being led by a Judahite in need of refuge (col. xvii 1-4; cp. "The Aramaic Text in Demotic Script," trans. Richard C. Steiner, COS 1.99:309-327, col. xvi 1-6): "They [came (?)] toward the evening watch. Broken men during [the mor]ning watch. [With] my own eyes I saw a troop of men co[mi]ng up. The Samarians made their way to my Lord the King. "From where are you, young man? From where are the [pe]ople of your dialect?" "I come from [J]udah, my brothers have been brou[ght] from Samaria. And now a man is bringing my sister from Jerusalem." "Come in, you, young man…" (van der Toorn, *Papyrus Amherst 63*, 75).

[14] From the perspective of the Deuteronomistic Historian (DtH), it would make sense why these northern refugees would not be referenced in his work. The northern kingdom was the one that split from Davidic reign, established cultic sites at Bethel and Dan, and never had a good king. In addition, the DtrH describes the new inhabitants of the land as continuing in the practice of active rebellion (2 Kgs 17:34) and, insult to injury, ethnically mixed (2 Kgs 17:24). The selective removal of this group of people's positive contributions would be consonant with the treatment of the northern kingdom by the DtH.

the bounds of the new city boundaries—witness this significant expansion of the city.[15] This enormous growth cannot be explained by natural projections for Jerusalem's population growth, nor would it have been sensible for Hezekiah to fortify a large area of uninhabited space in the face of the coming Assyrian threat. This space must have been occupied in large part from exiles coming from the conquered kingdom of Israel.[16]

In the accompanying graph, Burke traces some of the statistical implications of Jerusalem's growth in area.[17] The bottom curve represents a standard growth rate (0.6%) for urban centres in IA II from Syria-Palestine with Jerusalem as the city represented on the graph. The upper point on the far right of the graph indicates the highest point of expansion of the city onto the western hill under Hezekiah, approx. 55 ha. The shaded area above the standard rate is the hypothetical growth rate (1.03%) that would explain the deviation of the later point from the regular growth rate. Such a growth rate due to natural causes—nearly double the average—would be unprecedented in the southern Levant in the time. The drastic increase of Jerusalem's size is best explained by positing an unconventional and unplanned movement of displaced and exogenous peoples, with the northern refugees as the primary impetus for the population boom.



[15] Magen Broshi was the first to connect both of these events with Jerusalem's growth at the time (Magen Broshi, "Expansion of Jerusalem in the Reigns of Hezekiah and Manasseh," *IEJ* 24 [1974]: 21–26). See also Yigal Shiloh for an integration of new data from excavations subsequent to Broshi's proposal (Yigal Shiloh, "Jerusalem: The Early Periods and the First Temple Period," in *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, ed. Ephraim Stern [Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1993], 701-712).

[16] That the refugees on the western hill are from the northern kingdom after 722 BCE and not from the Shephelah in the aftermath of Sennacherib's 701 BCE campaign is drawn out by a number of factors. The growth of the western hill (stratum 9) precedes that of the Broad Wall (stratum 8), and, if refugees from the Shephelah were in part responsible for growth onto the western hill, this implies that Hezekiah built his wall around largely uninhabited territory before Sennacherib's invasion. In addition, 42 *lmlk* seals, which almost always date to the end of the eighth century, were found in stratum 8 on the western hill, when the Broad Wall was constructed.

[17] The following graph is from Aaron Burke, "An Anthropological Model for the Investigation of the Archaeology of Refugees in Iron Age Judah and its Environs," in *Interpreting Exile: Displacement and Deportation in Biblical and Modern Contexts*, ed. Brade E. Kelle, Frank Ritchel Ames, and Jacob L. Wright (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 49.

Isaiah describes a number of building projects initiated by Hezekiah in preparation for his rebellion and the expected Assyrian response. Though the prophet chides the king for his over-reliance on man-made machinations, portions of his oracle (Isa 22:8b-11) contain a number of historical correlations with the archaeological data.[18] The various building projects initiated by Hezekiah during the years building up to Sennacherib's invasion would have provided these refugees with employment in the city of Jerusalem. As refugees, these newcomers would have been at the mercy of the king and the state for support, and certainly benefitted from participation in large scale building projects.[19] Burke estimates the number of refugees living in this part of the city at 5,000, by minimal estimates (200 ppl/ha x 25 ha) and that 20% of these would be able bodied men (approx. 1000). These refugees had a basic need for employment in this urban environment, and could easily have been exploited in the name of ambitious building projects.[20] These "stimulus" projects were not simply humanitarian, and Hezekiah's interests were served by the surplus of labour provided by the refugees. Burke notes that the word in Akkadian for "fugitive" (*munnabtu*[*m*]) is identical to that for "refugee," indicating that refugees were often viewed as enemies by conquering powers for the ability to aid and abet a different enemy's resistance—much like the northern labourers did for Hezekiah.[21]

Hezekiah's preparations for war were met with that expectation: Sennacherib moved through the land and conquered "all the fortified cities of Judah" (2 Kgs 18:13), particularly in

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[18] Among other projects, Hezekiah built an armoury ("the weapons of the House of the Forest"), repaired sections of the wall ("you saw that the breeches of the city of David were many"), consolidated water resources ("you collected the waters of the lower pool" and "made a reservoir between the two walls"), and constructed a wall through a residential area ("you broke down the houses to fortify the wall"). The last of these has a likely referent in the "Broad Wall" excavated by Naḥman Avigad, which has remains of houses underneath the line of the wall. The construction of the Siloam tunnel was also likely accomplished during Hezekiah's reign (2 Kgs 20:20; 2 Chr 32:30).

[19] Aaron Burke, "An Anthropological Model," 50.

[20] Aaron Burke, "Coping with the Effects of War: Refugees in the Levant during the Bronze and Iron Ages," in *Disaster and Relief Management - Katastrophen und ihre Bewältigung*, ed. Angelika Berlejung (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 276.

[21] Burke, "An Anthropological Model," 51; cf. CAD 10.2:203-205.

the Shephelah.[22] By way of contrast, the city of Jerusalem and the territory of Benjamin, north of the city, remained largely intact.[23] Ephraim Stern notes that, for a state lacking the supplies of a large empire, the nation of Judah was able to rebuild quickly from the Assyrian invasion.[24] Strong, centralized governments (under Hezekiah and Manasseh) no doubt contributed, but an influx of refugees from the north was able to inject a needed stimulus of manpower into the economy. With the significant reduction in production from the Shephelah, having a host of labour available in the hill country impacted Judah's fortunes in Sennacherib's wake. Because the Assyrian army did not take the fight into the Judean hills, the economic loss in the Shephelah was much easier to overcome with the aid of the incoming northerners.[25] Along with the growth of Jerusalem in fortified area, a large number of smaller settlements developed at this time just outside of Jerusalem's boundaries, likely providing the growing city with the necessary agricultural production.[26]

The concern throughout Deuteronomy for the welfare of the גֵּר, especially in the Deuteronomic core (e.g. 16:1-17; 24:14-15, 17, 19-21), may relate to the phenomenon of

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[22] The archaeological record attests to a decimation of the Shephelah, the Negev, and even territories on the crest of the Judean hills (Beth-Zur and Ramat Raḥel). In this campaign, Sennacherib claims to have besieged 46 fortified towns and taken away 200,150 people from the Shephelah region of ancient Judah ("Sennacherib's Siege of Jerusalem," trans. Mordechai Cogan [*COS* 2.119B:302-303]). Israel Finkelstein estimates that around 85% of the settlements of the Shephelah were not reoccupied in the later stages of IA II, and that the total built up area decreased by 70% (Israel Finkelstein, "The Archaeology of the Days of Manasseh," in *Scripture and Other Artifacts*, ed. Philip J. King [Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994], 173). As the Shephelah was a contested territory between Philistia and Israel, Sennacherib took away this agriculturally productive area from Hezekiah and gave it to the Philistine city states, "His cities which I had despoiled I cut off from his land and gave them to Mitinti, king of Ashdod, Padi, king of Ekron and Ṣilli-bel, king of Gaza, and thus diminished his land" ("Sennacherib's Siege of Jerusalem," *COS* 2.119B). Judah was then forced to find new sources of agriculture in the Negev basin and in the Judean hill country. See Israel Finkelstein and Nadav Na'aman ("The Judahite Shephelah in the Late 8th and Early 7th Centuries BCE," *TA* 31 [2004]: 60-79) for the economic pressure put on the peoples of Judah by the Assyrian-backed Philistines in the area. This loss of agricultural land in the Shephelah would have required more foodstuffs to be cultivated in the hill country, and more people living near Jerusalem.

[23] Ephraim Stern, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible: The Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Periods 732-332 BCE* (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 130.

[24] Stern, "Archaeology of the Land of the Bible," 131.

[25] In fact, it appears that the Shephelah never really recovered in Judah's favour. Instead, their economic attention turned to the Negev and the Judean Wilderness, in addition to a focusing of economic activity in the hill country around Jerusalem (Daniel Master "From the Buqê'ah to Ashkelon," in *Exploring the Longue Durée: Essays in Honor of Lawrence E. Stager,* ed. J. David Schloen [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009], 313).

[26] For a survey of the extra-mural developments near Jerusalem, see Finkelstein, "The Archaeology of the Days of Manasseh." It is telling that one of the Lachish letters, from the early 6th c. BCE, a certain Shemaiah brings a letter from Lachish to "the city" (העירה; Lachish 4:7), likely referring to the premier urban location in Judah: Jerusalem.

displacement in the 8th and 7th centuries.[27] As Mark Glanville has demonstrated, the common translations of גֵּר as "foreigner" or "resident alien" are inadequate, as members of different clans, tribes, or villages in a kinship based society could be as much an indicator of outsiderism as ethnicity or nationality.[28] Even when the גֵּר appears in the context of "all Israel," the otherness of the גֵּר is located on the level of the household and the clan.[29] In these types of social groups, inclusion into the group does not have to be based on blood ties, but can be done on the basis of fictive kinship. Scholarship has proposed a number of historical events for the identity of the גֵּר in Deuteronomy: 1) a refugee from the north displaced by the Assyrians, 2) a foreigner from a kingdom other than Israel or Judah, and 3) an internally displaced Judahite.[30] The text, however, is not specific, and any combinations of these options could be correct. Deuteronomy is not so much concerned with the identification of the גֵּר, as much as it is concerned about Israel's reception of these displaced outsiders.[31] Nevertheless, reading one of the manifestations of the גֵּר in Deuteronomy as a displaced northerner is certainly a reasonable interpretive option, and, given the archaeological context, is an informative reading. In Deuteronomy, the גֵּר is dependent, landless, and on the lowest rung of the social ladder, and it would be odd if Deuteronomy made provisions for these displaced persons from other nations, but none for those internally displaced, especially in the social upheaval resulting from the Assyrian invasions.[32] When considering the devastation of Samaria and the subsequent growth of Jerusalem, it is very likely that the Deuteronomic group incorporated some of their own experiences as displaced persons into their social vision.

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[27] Though the publication of Deuteronomy occurred during the reign of Josiah, there must have been an earlier copy of this document, or the traditions behind it, during the reign of Hezekiah. The parallels between Deuteronomy and Hosea have been noted (see section 2.6.1.2). Jeremiah, a late pre-exilic text, also has a special concern for the welfare of the גֵּר (Jer 7:6; 22:3).

[28] Mark Glanville, "The Gēr (Stranger) in Deuteronomy," *JBL* 137 (2018): 602-603.

[29] Glanville, "The Gēr," 604.

[30] For the proponents of each of these theories, see Glanville, "The Gēr," 602- 603.

[31] Glanville, "The Gēr," 603.

[32] Nadav Na'aman, "Sojourners and Levites in the Kingdom of Judah in the Seventh Century BCE," *ZABR* 14 (2008): 256, 258. In one of Burke's articles, he compares the UN definition of refugee status with the material evidence for the displacement of the northern kingdom into Judah (Burke, "Coping with the Effects," 266). He finds the categories of landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalization, food insecurity, increased morbidity and mortality, loss of access to common property assets, and community disarticulation as operative in these Iron Age refugee communities. Though he does not make the connection, the description of the גֵּר from Deuteronomy would certainly fit within this category.

If the growth of Jerusalem's fortified area was the direct result of an influx of refugees from the north, Burke's estimation of the demographic composition of the city leads to some interesting conclusions. Burke estimates that, if refugees were one of the catalysts for growth in the late 8th c. BCE, then arguably half of the population was "comprised of refugees in the years leading up to 720 BCE."[33] Temples and religious centres tend to be conservative institutions, but a dramatic demographic change within the urban centre of Jerusalem such as this would require the incorporation of the new population within the institutional worship at the temple, if not within the cohort of cultic workers themselves. This is especially so if there were political forces interested in integrating these new northern émigrés, as will be discussed in the following section. The types of people who came to Jerusalem were not only the destitute, but also included members of the elite,[34] and cultic personnel may well have been a part of this group. Given what is observable from the Hebrew Bible, the northern population's experience clearly had an impact in the composition of a wide variety of texts, such as the Pentateuch, as well as in the adoption of hymns and prayers into Jerusalem's worship material. If the psalms of Asaph as a group can be treated as the product of a particular Levitical guild, it is interesting that it exhibits characteristics of both north and south. This confluence of material from both the north and the south finds a plausible historical location in Jerusalem at the end of the 8th c. and the beginning of the 7th c. BCE. As stated above, though it is not an event attested in extant texts,[35] it is

[33] Burke, "An Anthropological Model," 49.

[34] In a Persian era fill from Jerusalem, though admittedly from a secondary context, there are two *lmlk* type seals with the inscribed name "Shebna," which is potentially the official mentioned in Isa 22:15-19. One of the spellings of Shebna's name is definitely northern, with a *-yaw* theophoric suffix. Another seal from near the Broad Wall also includes a northern patronymic: "Menaḥem (son of) Yawbanah (למנחם יובנה)." Ten other impressions of this same official are known from other controlled contexts in ancient Judah, with two additional variant spellings (יבנה and יהובנה). The difference in spelling of a significant official could mean that his name was spelled differently based on the orthographic practice of the local population (Naḥman Avigad and Gabriel Barkay, "The *lmlk* and Related Seal Impressions," in *Jewish Quarter Excavations in the Old City of Jerusalem Conducted by Naḥman Avigad, 1969-1982 Volume II: The Finds from Areas A, W and X-2: Final Report*, ed. Hillel Geva [Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2000], 247-250). This name ("Yaw has built") provides a tantalizing, though unprovable, parallel between the construction of the wall around this part of the city, and the asylum granted to northern refugees.

[35] One notable possibility may be the response to Hezekiah's call to celebrate Passover in 2 Chr 30:25, "And all the congregation of Judah rejoiced: the priests and the levites, and all the congregation who came from Israel, and the sojourners who came out of Israel, and the inhabitants of Judah." The sojourners from Israel, differentiated from those simply "from Israel" could be these refugees from the north, or, alternatively, it could refer to different groups from the north responding to Hezekiah's invitation (2 Chr 30:10-12).

reasonable to assume that exiles from the north came down to Jerusalem after the Assyrians under Sargon II ousted the kings in Samaria.[36]

3.3 Literature in the Hezekian Era

As the refugees from the north entered into Judah, Jerusalem increasingly became more and more urbanized, and with that came the commensurate need for a scribal class to handle the burgeoning bureaucracy.[37] Though it does not represent the totality of written material that was produced at the time, the epigraphic evidence for Hebrew in Judah begins to increase and could be indicative of a growing state apparatus. William Schniedewind has suggested that the time between Hezekiah and Josiah, rather than the Persian period, was the period where much of the biblical material had its origin, as the city of Jerusalem was large enough to maintain a robust scribal class.[38] This time period saw the production and collection of a number of texts, some imported from the north (Amos, Hosea), some from the Shephelah (Micah), while yet others were domestic productions (First Isaiah). As a number of scholars have suggested, an early version of the Deuteronomistic history was composed at this time, as the northern court documents and prophetic stories made their way south.[39] Other texts were collated during this reign, as evident from Hezekiah's men gathering a portion of Solomon's proverbs (Pro 25:1).[40] In

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[36] Like Jerusalem, Ekron (Tell Miqne) experienced a large scale growth after the Assyrian campaigns of the late 8th c. BCE (Trude Dothan and Seymour Gitin, "Tell Miqne [Ekron]," in *New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land, Volume 3*, ed. Ephraim Stern [Jerusalem: Carta, 1993], 1051-1059). After its zenith in IA I, the site of Ekron shrunk from 50 to 10 acres, but under Assyrian rule in the early 7th c. BCE it expanded again to 85 acres. The excavators attribute this phenomenal growth to the burgeoning olive oil industry in the 7th c. BCE stratum (IC). Among the remains in this stratum, 102 olive oil installations were found, with an estimated production of 1000 tons annually, which ranks as the most in the ANE at the time. However, the eightfold increase in area cannot be explained by economic considerations alone, and Ekron, as Jerusalem, must have received a significant number of displaced persons from the Assyrian conquest of the coastal regions and the Shephelah (Burke, "An Anthropological Model," 53).

[37] William Schniedewind, ""Jerusalem, the Late Judahite Monarchy, and the Composition of the Biblical Texts," in *Jerusalem in the Bible and Archaeology: The First Temple Period,* eds. Andrew G. Vaughn and Ann E. Killebrew (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 379.

[38] "In contrast, none of the conditions conducive to a literary flourishing existed in the Babylonian or Persian periods. Indeed, these were periods of retrenchment that were best suited to the collection, preservation, and editing of literature, not to its creation," Schniedewind, "Jerusalem," 379.

[39] Schniedewind, "Jerusalem," 379; cf. James A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Kings*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1951), 44.

[40] Michael Fox compares this impulse of Hezekiah to parallel developments in Assyria. Just as Ashurbanipal, one generation later, collected and maintained a library, Hezekiah may have done the same for the literature of his people. Hezekiah's reign was amply suitable for this type of national re-entrenchment (Michael V. Fox, *Proverbs 10-31*, AB 18B [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009], 776-778).

sum, the growing urbanization of Jerusalem led to an environment that produced favourable conditions for the collection of traditions and production of texts.

3.3.1 The Deuteronomistic History

Nearly every modern theory about the Deuteronomic History (DtrH) stems from the pioneering work of Martin Noth. Before his essay, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*, most commentators held to views that either treated the Former Prophets with the same documentary sources applied to the Pentateuch (J and E), or read these books as products of a long series of redactions.[41] Noth viewed the books from Joshua to Kings as the product of a specific scribal school, redacted during the exile as a single historiographic work, and to which their own compositions were added. This work specifically addressed the concerns of the exilic community, and addressed the causes and reasons for the exile. The central theme running through this work is the slow, but inevitable, spiritual and political decline of Israel and Judah until the Babylonian destruction in 586 BCE, punctuated by the sins of Jeroboam in the north and Manasseh in the south. Building in part off of this theory, Frank Moore Cross suggests that the DtrH has both a pre-exilic and a post-exilic redaction.[42] Unlike Noth, Cross dates the main creative work for the DtrH to the reign of Josiah (his Dtr^1), while the exilic redactor was responsible for only a minor reworking of some of the themes (his Dtr^2). The first was composed during the reign of Josiah to support his reforms, and the second stems from an exilic editor who was concerned with explaining the Babylonian exile to an audience in Babylon. Within his pre-exilic Dtr^1, Cross ascribed two overarching themes: Jeroboam's separation from Judah as the crucial event for the north, and the eternal nature of the promises to the house of David.[43]

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[41] Steven L. Mckenzie, The Deuteronomistic History," *ABD* 2 (1992): 160.

[42] Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 274-290.

[43] Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 278-285. Cross believes that the threat of apostasy and the positive royal ideology expressed in these two motifs fit perfectly in the reforms of Josiah, not in the exilic period. Before the pericope on Manasseh (2 Kgs 21:2-15), there is no indication that hope in the Davidic line is futile or destined for exile, as may be expected from an exilic perspective (Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 285). The literary product of Cross' exilic redactor is significantly less extensive than the pre-exilic, with only a revised account of Manasseh and the reigns of the post-Josianic kings added, along with a few scattered additions (Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 285-287). Cross insists that exile was always a threat under the Neo-Assyrians, and that references to exile do not have to postdate 586 BCE (Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 287).

Later writers have elaborated on this dual redaction theory and posited an additional level of redaction to Hezekiah. Ian Provan, building on the work of Helga Weippert, notes that there are two attitudes towards the בָּמוֹת in the book of Kings.[44] The primary theme in 1 Kgs 3-2 Kgs 18 is that the בָּמוֹת are Yahwistic shrines, but are viewed negatively because worship is not yet centralized in Jerusalem—something Hezekiah would first accomplish (see 1 Kgs 15:11-15; 2 Kgs 18:4). Editorial work on this segment by the Josianic and exilic editors, as well as their own compositions in 2 Kgs 20-25, portray the בָּמוֹת as fundamentally idolatrous and unorthodox. In addition, most of the references to the בָּמוֹת in the judgment formulae applied to the Judahite kings follow a strict pattern (רַק הַבָּמוֹת לֹא־סָרוּ) which is identical throughout this first edition (1 Kgs 15:14; 22:44; 2 Kgs 12:4; 14:4; 15:4; 15:35).[45] However, when describing Hezekiah in the annalistic account (2 Kgs 18:4; cf. 18:22), the DtrH fronts the perfect verb with a pronoun, indicating a special emphasis in contrast with former kings (הוּא הֵסִיר אֶת־הַבָּמוֹת).[46] The difference in how Hezekiah is treated indicates that some form of the Deuteronomistic history was extant during the reign of Hezekiah, or shortly thereafter. Josiah's later activity with the בָּמוֹת differs considerably in form from these examples (2 Kgs 23:8)—they not only had to be removed, but they also had to be "defiled" (וַיְטַמֵּא אֶת־הַבָּמוֹת).

Other connections with Hezekiah can be made in how this pre-exilic edition interpreted the fall of Samaria.[47] The cardinal sin of the northern kingdom in this pre-exilic edition is that they broke from the Davidic dynasty, not that they behaved idolatrously (esp. 1 Kgs 12:19; 2 Kgs 17:20-21).[48] Within this politically charged narrative, Hezekiah emerges as the "new David" (2

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[44] Ian Provan, *Hezekiah and the Book of Kings: A Contribution to the Debate about the Composition of the Deuteronomistic History*, BZAW 172 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1988), 90.

[45] That this specific judgment formula applies only from Asa to Hezekiah in Judah, and from Joram to Hoshea in Israel, could indicate the specific bounds of the DtrH during the time of Hezekiah. Because of these bounds, André Lemaire posits that the kings previous to these were part of a redaction done in the time of Jehoshaphat (Andre Lemaire, "Toward a Redactional History of the Book of Kings," in *Reconsidering Israel and Judah: Recent Studies on the Deuteronomistic History*. ed. Gary N. Knoppers and J. Gordon McConville [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2000], 452).

[46] Provan, *Hezekiah*, 85; cf. JM §155nb.

[47] Provan, *Hezekiah*, 116-117; Schniedewind, "Jerusalem," 388-389.

[48] 2 Kings 17:21 (כִּי־קָרַע יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵעַל בֵּית דָּוִד) is usually translated with Yahweh as the agent of the first verb (קרע, i.e. "Because Yahweh tore Israel away from the house of David), but Israel (יִשְׂרָאֵל) should probably be the subject, as the following verb would suggest (וַיַּמְלִיכוּ אֶת־יָרָבְעָם). Granted, in other portions of the DtrH Yahweh is the one who "tears apart" a kingdom (1 Sam 15:28; 1 Kgs 11:13; 14:8), but the syntax of this passage, with Israel immediately following the verb and a plural verb in continuation, suggests Israel is the subject. In the previously cited examples, where a kingdom is "torn apart," the direct object is explicitly stated with the object marker (cf. 1 Sam 15:28 קָרַע יְהוָה אֶת־מַמְלְכוּת יִשְׂרָאֵל). No such particle is extant before in this verse.

Kgs 18:3) and the southern line of kings are vindicated over and against their northern counterparts because Jerusalem is spared by Sargon II in 722 BCE and Sennacherib in 701 BCE. Among the other Davidic kings, only of Hezekiah and David is it said that Yahweh was "with him" (2 Kgs 18:7; cf. 1 Sam 16:18; 2 Sam 5:10), that the king prospered in war (2 Kgs 18:7; cf. 1 Sam 18:15), and that he defeated the Philistines (2 Kgs 18:8; cf. 2 Sam 8:1).[49] Like his forefather David, Hezekiah made efforts to integrate the new northerners into Judahite society.[50] During Hezekiah's reform, he sent out messengers to Ephraim and Manasseh that they should come and celebrate the Passover in Jerusalem (2 Chr 30:1) so as to appeal to and control this influx of northerners in the city.[51] Archaeologists have also found a number of *lmlk* seals in northern contexts, which indicates some presence of Hezekiah's vast bureaucracy past the confines of Judah.[52] Hezekiah may even have been appealing to the northern exiles by naming his son after a northern tribal figure (Manasseh), and giving him a wife from the Galilee, in the north (2 Kgs 21:19).[53] This son, Manasseh, is the only Judean king directly compared to King Ahab in his apostasy (21:3), perhaps reflecting a negative northern influence on the cult.

The very fact that northern material remains in the DtrH is surprising. Clearly, the final edition of the text evidences a fundamentally religious opposition to the northern kingdom, as opposed to political—Josiah's reforms had a particular invective against Bethel (2 Kgs 23:15-16) and other northern cultic sites (2 Kgs 23:19; cp. 21:3). Even so, the northern kingdom is occasionally described in relatively positive terms, particularly in the Elijah-Elisha narratives (1

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[49] Examples from Provan, *Hezekiah*, 116-117.

[50] Schniedewind, "Jerusalem," 380.

[51] Though not weighing as heavily on the DtrH as Josiah's reform, Hezekiah's religious reform found in 2 Chronicles can be identified from a number of sources. First, both the annalistic source (2 Kgs 18:4) and the first prophetic source (2 Kgs 18:22) of Hezekiah's eventful reign attest to his removal of high places, his breaking of *masseboth*, the cutting down of the Asherah, and his abolishing of the Nehushtan, the Mosaic bronze snake. Second, a number of archaeological contexts (Lachish, Beersheba, Arad) have implied a centralization of the cult at the end of the 8th c. BCE. For a defence of the essential history of the Chronicler's accounts of Hezekiah's reforms (2 Chr 29-31), see Robb Andrew Young, *Hezekiah in Tradition and History*, SuppVT 155 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 195-255, esp. 231-233.

[52] The connection between the *lmlk* seals and the late 8th c. BCE reign of Hezekiah remains secure ever since Ussishkin's observations at Lachish (David Ussishkin, "The Destruction of Lachish by Sennacherib and the Dating of the Royal Judean Storage Jars," *TA* 4 [1977]: 28–57). These royal seals are found in level III, the city destroyed by Sennacherib, but are absent from the subsequent layer, level II. The consensus is that these seals performed an administrative function specifically for the kingdom of Judah, supplying liquid goods (oil or wine) to vulnerable locations along Judah's border. For an example from Bethel, see Hanan Eshel, "A *lmlk* Stamp from Beth-El," *IEJ* 39 (1989): 60-62; and for one from Jezreel, see David Ussishkin, "Tell Jezreel," in vol. 2 of *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Ancient Near East*, ed. Eric M. Meyers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 246.

[53] Her hometown, Jotbah (יָטְבָה), is almost certainly identified with Kh. Jefāt, 14 km north of modern Nazareth (Simons, *Geographical and Topographical Texts*, §957).

Kgs 21:27-29; 22; 2 Kgs 6-7; 13:14-21), and the northern kings are even praised for their military might (1 Kgs 16:5, 27; 22:45; 2 Kgs 10:34; 13:8, 12; 14:28)—an accolade which the southern kings never receive.[54] Schniedewind posits that this partially positive perspective on the north fits well within an edition by Hezekiah's scribes, who sought to incorporate northern refugees, and, indeed, the territory of Israel, into a new "united kingdom."[55] Both of Cross' themes for this pre-exilic redaction—namely, Israel's political separation, and the validity of the Davidic line—are more serviceable during Hezekiah's reign than they are with Josiah, without denying the validity of a Josianic or late pre-exilic redaction. The emphasis on Jeroboam's sin of separation are juxtaposed with Hezekiah's efforts to reunite the kingdoms, and the preservation of Jerusalem and the Davidic line after the Assyrian invasions foreground Yahweh's promise of an eternal throne to David.

One of the criticisms against the scholarly definition of the DtrH is that its focus lies mainly on the books of Kings, but the sources behind the redaction of the DtrH surely had their own textual history, with much of the material coming from the northern kingdom of Israel. Alexander Rofé, in an insightful article, puts forward the idea that the block of text from Joshua 24-1 Sam 12 is an explicitly "Ephraimite" historiographic work.[56] From this section, which he suggests is the original book of Judges, he subtracts portions of the text that are later additions: Judges 17-21,[57] as well as the introduction to Judges (Jud 1:1-3:11).[58] Other portions of the DtrH have northern narratives (Josh 8:30-35 10:1-15; 1 Kgs 11-2 Kgs 17; Deut 11:26-30; 27:12-13; 27:4-8; etc.), but they are thoroughly Deuteronomistic in outlook. The text Rofé identifies is an

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[54] William Schniedewind, "The Problem of Kings: Recent Studies in the Deuteronomistic History," *RSR* 22 (1996): 26.

[55] William Schniedewind, *How the Bible Became a Book: The Textualization of Ancient Israel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 78.

[56] Alexander Rofè, "Ephraimite versus Deuteronomistic History," in *Reconsidering Israel and Judah: Recent Studies on the Deuteronomistic History*, eds. Gary N. Knoppers and J. Gordon McConville (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 462-474.

[57] Unlike the rest of the book, this section is not structured around judges (or, "saviours"), and there appears to be a specific intention to highlight the need for a monarchy that is not found elsewhere in the book (בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם אֵין מֶלֶךְ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל אִישׁ הַיָּשָׁר בְּעֵינָיו יַעֲשֶׂה; Jud 17:6; 18:1;19:1; 21:25)

[58] Rofè, "Ephraimite," 465. The Septuagint appears to preserve a separate literary edition of the book of Joshua that would obviate the need for this early portion of Judges. The difference in the Septuagint contains an exposition after the end of MT's text (Josh 24:33) of Israel's unfaithfulness to Yahweh ("And the sons of Israel begin to worship Astarte and Astaroth and the gods of the nations around them"), and ends with Israel in the hands of Eglon, king of Moab ("And the Lord handed them into the hands of Eglon, king of Moab, who lorded over them 18 years"). This conclusion would be ably continued if Judges 3:12ff succeeded this text. See Emmanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 297-298 for a concise summary of the issues.

entirely northern composition, with hardly any references to Judah, and some striking differences with the ideology found in DtrH: these texts have no problem with non-centralized worship, and even seem to legitimize the sites of Shechem (Josh 24:1, 25), Ramah (1 Sam 7:17; 9:5-25), Mizpah (1 Sam 7:5-6; Jud 5:11), and Gilgal (1 Sam 10:8; 11:15); like Hosea, monarchy is an office reserved for Yahweh (1 Sam 10:19a; 12:7-11; cf. Hos 13:4, 10), which differs from the positive evaluation of the Davidic kings in DtrH; and, in this Ephraimite history, Israel passively engages in war until Yahweh comes to fight for them (Josh 24:12; Jud 7:2; 1 Sam 7:8), whereas in the DtrH, Israel actively fights with Yahweh (Josh 11:7-8; 2 Kgs 18:7-8).[59] That there exist connections with Hosea prompts Rofé to suggest that this collection of material was completed near the end of the northern kingdom's life. That it would subsequently be incorporated into DtrH in Hezekiah's time accords well with the observations made above about the nature of the DtrH, and the political and social environment of Jerusalem in the late 8th c. BCE. If this northern material was not incorporated into the DtrH during the Hezekian era, one has to wonder when else it could have come in. It seems that the Josianic and exilic periods had too negative a view of the north to be able to reflect positively on its achievements and, if the record in Chronicles is any indication, post-exilic audiences were not concerned at all with the remnants of the northern kingdom. Therefore, Hezekiah's reign, which evidences a particular openness to material from the north being incorporated within the libraries of ancient Judah, is the probable context for this first redaction.

3.3.2 Prophetic Works

In addition to the DtrH, a number of examples emerge in the 8th c. prophets that reflect certain concerns of Hezekiah's reign.[60] Of these prophets, the one most closely associated with Hezekiah was Isaiah of Jerusalem. Though there has been some editorial work detected within First Isaiah (1-39), much of the material found there has an historical origin in the late 8th c. BCE. Among numerous cases of interaction with his time, some portions of his work reflect on Hezekiah's recapitulation of the Davidic ideal. Like the DtrH, First Isaiah seems to emphasize

[59] Rofè, "Ephraimite," 467-471.

[60] Much of the following discussion on the prophets is a development of Schniedewind, "Jerusalem," 387-388, 390-393.

the failure of the northern kingdom in their separation from the Davidic throne (7:17).[61] The oracle in Isaiah 9 considers the Assyrian campaign into the northern kingdom at the hands of Tiglath-Pileser III in 733 BCE,[62] and urges the remnant from the north to take solace in the next Judean king, Hezekiah ("to us a son has been given"), as the hope for restoration.[63] Because of the actions of Assyria, the Israelites wandering in darkness see the "great light" of a new king on the throne of David, whose rule and peace will never end (9:6).[64] One of the titles for this king, "mighty God" (אֵל גִּבּוֹר), may even be a veiled reference to Hezekiah's name, which is similar in meaning (חזק יה, "Yahweh is my strength"). A later reference to this "mighty God" in Isaiah has a similar intent (10:21) when proclaiming that "a remnant will return, a remnant of Jacob [i.e. northern Israel], to Mighty God." Indeed, Isaiah proclaims that the Davidic king will assemble the remnant of Israel from across the nations and remove the enmity between Ephraim and Judah (11:10, 12-13).

While only a few prophetic works from this period originated in the south (First Isaiah, Micah), there is a general assumption that the prophetic texts imported from the north (Amos and Hosea) have been worked over by a Judahite editor. If these texts were to be accepted in the south, there needed to be some measure of redaction to include Judah within the audience.[65] Though Amos was a prophet from the southern town of Tekoa (Amos 1:1), he became a voice critical of the northern establishment. As a book preserved in the libraries of Judah, its relevance for that second audience lay in its prediction of Samaria's destruction and the hope of a future

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[61] "Yahweh will bring upon you and upon your people and upon the house of your father such days as have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah—the king of Assyria."

[62] For an equation of the three groups in Isa 8:23 (Eng 9:1) of the way to the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, and Galilee of the nations with the conquests of Tiglath-Pileser III (2 Kgs 15:29) see Rainey and Notley, *Sacred Bridge*, 230-231.

[63] Young, *Hezekiah*, 163.

[64] A generation ago, von Rad and Alt popularized the idea that the oracle in Isaiah 8:23-9:7 is an ascension oracle, with affinities to Egyptian royal practice (Gerhard von Rad, *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays*, trans. E. W. T. Dicken [Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1966], 229-231). In Egyptian ritual, the public announcement of divine birth comes only at the ascension, coronation, and bestowal of royal titularies to the new king. At the coronation of a Judahite king, von Rad argued that there would be a similarly symbolic adoption ceremony (cp. Psa 2:7) and the proclamation of his royal names. Alt differed from von Rad in that he interpreted the "we" of Isa 9:6 as heralds sent by Judah to the northern kingdom to present Hezekiah as the hope for a northern audience (see the summary of these two authors in J.J. Roberts, "Whose Child is This? Reflections on the Speaking Voice in Isaiah 9:5," in *The Bible and the Ancient Near East* [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997], 143). Just as in Psa 2:6-12, the father-son relationship to Yahweh is proclaimed as a prelude to the defeat of the king's enemies (Psa 2:9) and blessing for the kingdom (Psa 2:8), so Isaiah sees the fall of Assyria (Isa 9:4-5) and blessing for Judah (Isa 9:6-7) as a result of this new king's ascension to the throne (Roberts, "Whose Child is This?" 154-156).

[65] Schniedewind, "Jerusalem," 393.

Davidic reunification of the kingdoms (9:11-12). This final portion of the book has generally been analyzed as a later addition, and usually ascribed to the exilic or post-exilic period. According to Shalom Paul, some of it may refer to the rebuilding of Jerusalem in an exilic setting ("And I shall repair its breaches, and I shall raise up its ruins"), but an original oracle can be identified ("In that day, I will raise up the fallen booth of David … and I will build it as the days of old").[66] The focus on the Davidic king bringing restoration to the two kingdoms of Israel, restoring it "as the days of old" (9:11), and then expanding out towards those kingdoms conquered by David (i.e. Edom, cf. 2 Sam 8:14) probably fits best in the early, optimistic days of Hezekiah's rule.[67] The verb בנה does not have to imply the rebuilding of physical structures, but can be used metaphorically of the restoration of both kingdoms under one ruler (Jer 33:9; cf. Deut 25:9; Psa 28:5). Part of the reason that the whole oracle gets pushed to the exilic period is that the Davidic house is "fallen," and referred to as a "booth." Instead of indicating its non-existence, these words could dramatically indicate the lessened status of the houses of Israel following the rupture caused by Jeroboam I.

As opposed to Amos, Hosea the prophet had no direct ties to the southern kingdom. However, the final edition of the text bears some marks of connection with Hezekiah's political program in Judah (see glosses in Hos 1:7; 3:5; 6:11a). The coalescence of the Hosean oracles into its final form probably occurred during the later portion of Hezekiah's reign ("in the days of … Hezekiah," Hos 1:1). Hosea makes reference to the preservation of Jerusalem in 701 BCE in what is otherwise an oracle specifically directed to Israel (1:7)—Judah will receive mercy, while Israel will not. The kings of Israel do not fare well in Hosea's estimation (7:3; 8:4, 10; 10:3, 7; 13:10-11), and this could reflect the carousel of contenders in the later days of the northern kingdom (cf. 2 Kgs 15:8-31). Hosea claims that the citizens of the north lived without a legitimate king, and that they had lived "many days without king or prince" (3:4) and had even

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[66] Shalom Paul, *Amos: A Commentary on the Book of Amos*, Hermenia (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1990), 290-292.

[67] Shalom Paul suggests that because only a portion of Edom remains to be conquered in the oracle (שְׁאֵרִית אֱדוֹם), the historical background must be from a time when Judah had some control over Edom's territory. He suggests the reign of Uzziah, when the Edomite port city of Elath was conquered (2 Kgs 14:22; 2 Chr 26:2). Though the city was lost to the Arameans under Rezin, Tiglath-Pileser III removed Aramean influence from Judahite territory, and presumably reverted control to their vassal, Judah. This important city may still have been under Judah's control during the time of Hezekiah.

"made kings, but not through me [Yahweh]" (8:4). The goal of Hosea's Judahite redactor is that they would return to "David, their king" (3:5) in the "latter days." Clearly, the final edition of this book saw the monarchy of the north as illegitimate when compared with the Davidic throne, a theme seen in the first edition of the DtrH, and that northern Israel's future involved a reconnection with the Davidic line.

3.4 Summary

Hezekiah not only played a large role in the history of ancient Israel, but he is also remembered very fondly in the literature from his era. As he brought in the exiles from the north, the sources imagined him as a *David redivivus*—one who was able to unite the disparate tribes of Israel and occupy the eternal throne designated for David. The literature surveyed above indicates that many of these texts had a political aim in presenting Hezekiah in this manner. In such an historical environment, as the northerners came down to Jerusalem and brought their documents and traditions with them, they had to find a way to continue their liturgical tradition. The tradents who came to the city would have to make sense of their new position under the hegemony of the Davidic crown, and their relationship with the broader Assyrian empire asserting itself in the southern Levant. If other collections of northern literature are preserved in the prophetic,[68] historical,[69] and epic literature,[70] it stands to reason that their songs of worship could also be. In addition, one has to wonder how long these traditions would have endured

[68] Most clearly, Hosea was a northern prophet to a northern audience. Amos, though himself a southerner, had a message specifically directed to the northern kingdom.

[69] Though the dominant perspective in the Deuteronomistic history is that of Judah, there are significant pockets of northern sources in Joshua (covenant at Shechem), Judges (Ehud, Deborah, Gideon, etc.), Samuel (the Samuel and Saul narratives), and Kings (Elijah, Elisha). The preceding examples are certainly not comprehensive, and many more could be garnered from the Deuteronomistic history.

[70] The Elohist and Deuteronomist pentateuchal sources are generally considered northern.

among their respective tradents after the dissolution of the northern state.[71] Hezekiah's literati were keen to include northern material into similar collections from the south in order to strengthen the ties between the two, and to project the Davidic king as the hope for a restoration of the two kingdoms. As will be suggested below, the liturgists behind the psalms of Asaph have produced texts that fit within this historical reconstruction.[72] These Psalms likely represent the work of a particular guild that produced these psalms in the period during and following the reign of Hezekiah.

[71] Taking a step back from the preceding proposal, some authors have suggested that the era in which the Jerusalem community integrated northern traditions was the post-exilic period. In order to support this notion, scholars, such as Ernst Axel Knauf, propose that Bethel functioned as a repository for these northern traditions into the Persian period and that it was between the late 7th c. BCE and the end of the Archemenid period that Judah began to incorporate Israelite material into their own traditions based on their interactions with the sanctuary at this site (Fleming, *The Legacy of Israel*, 318-319). However, as Daniel Fleming has rightly countered, it is a logical stretch to assume that northern Israelites would have maintained their political and traditional identity apart from the state apparatus, as their memories of these traditions would only tend to drift with the assumption of newer political circumstances (Fleming, *The Legacy of Israel*, 319-320.). Under the Neo-Assyrian empire, Bethel would have became a part of Jerusalem's centralized political world and would not have maintained a separate identity. Fleming even suggests that the kinship-based unity for Israel and Judah evident in the Jacob narrative would have been appropriate after the fall of the northern kingdom and the beginning of imperial domination. The exilic character of the story, where Jacob leaves the land and then later returns, could reflect the Israelite experience of exile brought about by the Assyrians in the late eighth century: "This would be the work of an Israelite "exile" community, anticipating and perhaps even offering a model for Judah's exile literature that became the framework for the Bible as we have it," (Fleming, *The Legacy of Israel*, 320-321).

[72] "… the linguistic and functional analysis of the psalms themselves allows one to move back beyond the post-exilic information of the Chronicles tradition into the pre-exilic period … What the Asaphite psalms clearly show is that at some point in the pre-exilic period the Ephraimites did achieve at least something of a presence in the central cult" (Nasuti, *Tradition History*, 193-194).

Chapter 4: Historical Encounters in the Psalms of Asaph

4.1 Introduction

While the contextual world within which the psalms of Asaph originally found their expression has so far been outlined by appealing to relatively isolated phrases and clauses within these psalms, this hypothesis must still be valid when reading each individual psalm. These psalmists did not stitch together their poems by drawing from a list of available traditions or a geographic gazetteer. Rather, the psalms they wrote were intended to be used for actual performance in their worshipping communities, and ultimately were read as whole texts. Given the reconstructions of Hezekiah's reign proffered above, it is worth examining how individual psalms within the collection can be read in this particular historical situation. If the mixture of northern and southern elements in these psalms finds a proper home in this era, perhaps these psalms can contribute to Hezekiah's historical portrait, as well as provide a snapshot into the developing theology of an internally displaced, Israelite community. If the second chapter of this thesis dealt more with the question of *who* these psalms came from, and the third chapter examined *when* these psalms may have originated, the current chapter will integrate the two results to propose a *why* for this group of psalms. If the preceding arguments hold—namely, that these psalms are northern in origin and come from Jerusalem in the time between Hezekiah to the end of the kingdom of Judah—then which historical scenarios prompted these northern tradents to write the Asaphite psalms for the Jerusalem audience?

In the interest of limiting the size of this thesis, only a select number of psalms in this collection will be examined to see how they fit within the context described above, though each of the psalms of Asaph could be analyzed in this way. Therefore, only the psalms that have reasonable ties to Hezekiah and the events during his reign will be examined (50, 76, 78, 80, 83). The prophetic psalms dealing with the renewal of the covenant (Pss 50, 81) would be especially illuminating during the reign of Josiah, as there may be connections between the publication of Deuteronomy, the Succession Treaty of Esarhaddon, and these psalms. Another two prophetic psalms (Pss 75, 82), in their proclamations of judgment on the nations and their gods, could also be products of a community under the heel of Assyrian vassalage. In addition, there are three

Asaphite psalms that allude to the Babylonian exile (Pss 74, 77, 79), and one that does not provide enough evidence beyond a generic "Levitical" setting (Psa 73).

4.2 Psalms 50 & 76: Lions, Deities, and Kings

Of all of the references to lions in the Psalms, it is striking that the only instances where Yahweh is described as a lion who rages against his foes come from the psalms of Asaph (Psa 50:22; 76:3).[1] Brent Strawn outlines the various ways in which the psalmists employ leonine imagery, with many of the relevant images belonging to descriptions of the psalmist's enemies (Pss 7:3; 10:9; 17:12; 22:14; 22:17; 22:22; 35:17; 57:5; 58:7; 74:4) or to descriptions of natural order (Pss 34:11; 91:13; 104:21; 111:5).[2] Some psalms use leonine imagery for Yahweh's role as a providential and sustaining deity, as a mother lion provides prey for her young (104:21; 111:5; cf. 34:11), though Strawn admits that these could describe Yahweh as one who merely controls the lion.[3] The references to Yahweh as a tearing and raging lion in Psa 50:22 and Psa 76:3, 5 are therefore all the more pointed for their uniqueness in the Psalter. In the symbolic language of the ancient Near East, lions hold pride of place in depictions of both deities and kings. Particularly in the northern prophets, Yahweh is frequently described as a roaring and raging lion (Hos 5:14; 6:1; 11:10; 13:7-8; Amos 1:2; 3:8, 12).[4] Given the similarities between Pss 50 and 76 on this issue, perhaps the similarities serve to communicate something about the social situation of these psalms.

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[1] The verb טרף can also be used in reference to the activity of wolves (Gen 49:27; Eze 22:27).

[2] Brent Strawn, "Lion hunting in the Psalms: Iconography and Images for God, the Self, and the Enemy," in *Iconographic Exegesis of the Hebrew Bible: An Introduction to its Method and Practice*. eds. Izaak de Hulster, Brent Strawn, and Ryan P. Bonfiglio (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), 245-261.

[3] Strawn, "Lion Hunting in the Psalms," 253.

[4] A number of seals from Israelite contexts could be interpreted as a depictions of Yahweh as a leonine figure, see Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses*, 190-191, and Brent Strawn *What is Stronger than a Lion? Leonine Image and Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East*, OBO 212 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 250-270. In the northern kingdom, personal seals from Shechem, Hazor, and Megiddo (Shema, servant of Jeroboam) bear the image of a lion and date to the 8th c. BCE. Other groups of leonine seals, from the 7th-6th centuries BCE, were found in a Judahite context: Tell el-Naṣbeh, Ramat Raḥel, and the recent digs near the Western Wall plaza, see Tallay Ornan, et al, "The Lord Will Roar from Zion" (Amos 1:2): The Lion as a Divine Attribute on a Jerusalem Seal and Other Hebrew Glyptic Finds from the Western Wall Plaza Excavations," '*Atiqot* 72 (2012): 7*, and Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddess*, 388.

The depiction of Yahweh being in his den (סֻכּוֹ) and in his lair (מְעֹנָתֹה) in Psa 76:3 has echoes with human dwelling imagery,[5] but is used in this psalm primarily for lion imagery. Hebrew סֻכּוֹ is used for a lion's den in Jer 25:38 and Psa 10:9, and is also similarly used in Ugaritic (Ug *sk* [II] "den, cove", *k lbim skh*),[6] while מְעֹנָה is used of lions at various places in the Hebrew Bible (Amos 3:4; Nah 2:13; Psa 104:22; Job 38:40; Song 4:8). These two words refer to the religious notion that Yahweh takes up residence in Zion, but also that he is the ravaging lion ready to pounce from that location. Lions were popular images of kings in the ancient world to represent their prowess in war and battle.[7] By taking this imagery, Yahweh is compared to other ancient royal forces that fight against the spread of their enemies through violent submission.

The Neo-Assyrian kings Sennacherib[8] and Esarhaddon[9] were fond of comparing themselves to wild lions who tore through their opponents.[10] In many of these cases, it seems that

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[5] סֻכּוֹ with סֻכָּה and מְעֹנָה with מָעוֹן. The ambiguity between human (i.e. a *bēt* of worship) and animal dwellings was likely intentional.

[6] DULAT, 263.

[7] Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, *Psalms 2: A Commentary on Psalms 51-100,* trans. Linda M. Malony (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 253. Lions, significantly, occupied two contrasting images with reference to the king. First, as noted above, the king himself could be described as a devouring lion, but the lion could also be an image of chaos that the king needed to defeat. The popular image of kings—across the ancient world—of participating in extravagant hunts (e.g. Thutmose III in "The Gebal Barkal Stela of Thutmose III," trans. James K. Hoffmeier, *COS* 2.2B 16b-18a) finds a particular expression in the hunt of lions. One memorable image from Ashurbanipal's palace shows the king driving a sword through a lion (ANEP 184), and, though it remains undated, a bulla depicting a king piercing a lion has been found in Samaria from after its incorporation as a provincial capital, see Mordechai Cogan, *The Raging Torrent: Historical Inscriptions from Assyria and Babylonia Relating to Ancient* Israel (Jerusalem: Carta, 2008), 19-20. When the psalmists describe their enemies as a lion, and implore Yahweh to hunt these animals on their behalf (Pss 10:9; 17:12; 22: 14, 22; 58:7), they may be drawing from similar imagery of the royal hunt, with Yahweh as the royal hunter of beast-like men.

[8] *RIMA* 3/2 148 9b′-11′: "*Like a raging lion* I put on arm]or (and) [...] plac[ed] a helmet suitable for combat [on my head]. In [my] ange[r, I rode quickly in my exalted battle chariot, which lays en]emies [low]"; *RIMA* 3/2 213 16-18: "When they reported his (Marduk-apla-iddina's) evil deeds to me, Sennacherib, the attentive man of the steppe, *I raged up like a lion* and ordered the march into [Babyl]on to confront him," Kirk A. Grayson, and Jamie Novotny, *The Royal Inscriptions of Sennacherib, King of Assyria (704-681 BCE), Part 2*, RIMA 3/2 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2014).

[9] *RIMA* 4 1 i 53-62: "I, Esarhaddon, who with the help of the great gods, his lords, does not turn back in the heat of battle, quickly heard of their evil deeds. I said 'Woe!' and rent my princely garment. I cried out in mourning, *I raged like a lion*, and my mood became furious. In order to exercise kingship (over) the house of my father I beat my hands together. I prayed to the gods Aššur, Sîn, Šamaš, Bēl, Nabû, and Nergal, Ištar of Nineveh, (and) Ištar of Arbela and they accepted my word(s). With their firm 'yes,' they were sending me reliable omen(s), (saying): 'Go! Do not hold back! We will go and kill your enemies.'"; *RIMA* 4 8 ii′ 5′-9′: "[*I raged like*] *a lion*, put on (my) coat of mail, (and) a helmet appropriate for ba[ttle]. I held in my hands the mighty bow (and) the [strong] arrow, which the god Aššur, king of the gods, placed [in my] hands," Eric Leichty, *The Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon, King of Assyria (680-669 BCE),* RIMA 4 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011).

[10] It was in the literary world, not the iconographic, that kings were imaged as lions. This image was particularly present among the Ramessides of Dynasties 19-20 in Egypt, and the Neo-Assyrian kings from Adad-Narari II through Esarhaddon, though the concentration is heavier in the later period, see Brent Strawn, "Whence Leonine Yahweh? Iconography and the History of Israelite Religion," in *Images and Prophecy in the Ancient Eastern Mediterranean,* ed. Martti Nissinen and Charles E. Carter (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009), 70.

the image had become an established trope, often in the king describing himself as a "raging lion." Nevertheless, this image appears to have been widespread enough to appear in descriptions of the Assyrian king in the Hebrew prophets. Isaiah describes the coming Assyrian army as a lion ("Their roaring is like a lion, like young lions they roar," Isa 5:29) and Nahum, around the end of the 7th c. BCE, mocks the destruction of Nineveh and the ruling lion of Assyria by asking where the lion's den (מְעוֹנָה) is, even though the lion had formerly provided prey for its family (Nah 2:12-14). Isaiah also applies this common imagery for the Assyrian king to Yahweh in his fight against the Assyrians. Just as a lion is not afraid of shouting shepherds, Isaiah describes Yahweh as a lion who growls over his prey (טַרְפּוֹ) and comes down to fight on Zion (Isa 31:4-5).[11] If these various references in Isaiah and Nahum can allude to the Assyrian empire—or Yahweh's imitation of the empire—, perhaps Psalm 76 may have the same historical background.[12] Read in this environment, this Psalm becomes a counter-text to Assyrian ideology and, by describing the battle from 76:4-7 with this imagery, rubs salt on the Assyrian lion's failure to capture Zion. It is Yahweh who is the tearing lion, not the mighty king of Assyria.

Though not a specific geographic feature, הררי־טרף in Psa 76:5 describes the place from where Yahweh, portrayed as a divine lion, attacks his foes. There are two text critical issues with this verse, the first dealing with the consonants, and the second the vowel pointing. First, both the LXX (ἀπὸ ὀρέων αἰωνίων) and the Syriac (ܡܢ ܛܘܪܐ ܥܬܝܩܐ) translate as "everlasting hills," which suggests that they are reading מֵהַרְרֵי־עַד. Hebrew עד can be read as either עַד ("prey" cf. Gen 49:27; Isa 33:23; Zeph 3:8) or עַד ("remote time"), and a shift from "prey" (MT) to "eternal" (LXX) could be explained by a confusion between these two homonyms from the same consonants.[13] Despite these similarities, it is easier to explain the reading in the LXX and Syriac as a harmonization with other, similar formulations (Hab 3:6; cp. Gen 49:26; Deut 33:15) based

[11] Isaiah 31:1-5 functions as a discrete oracle against going down to Egypt for help and, instead, trusting in Yahweh the lion to defeat the Assyrians. This historical context fits nicely with Isaiah of Jerusalem's castigation of Hezekiah for over-reliance on foreign help, especially from Egypt, and political maneuvering (cf. 19:1-15; 22:8b-14; 30:7).

[12] For the potential association of the form-critical group of "Psalms of Zion" (46, 48, 76) with the retreat of the Assyrians in 701 BCE, see section 4.5**.** Similarly, Strawn is willing, though hesitant, to connect the presence of lion imagery for God in the Bible from the late Neo-Assyrian or Babylonian time (Hosea, Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah) to these political influences "Whence Leonine Yahweh," 71.

[13] Similar constructions occur in Hab 3:6 (הַרְרֵי־עַד, cj. Gen 49:26) and Deut 33:15 (הַרְרֵי־קֶדֶם). Though Deut 33:15 has a similar construction ("hills of old"), it is too distinct from the text of Psa 76:5 to be a plausible original. The best progression seems to be טרף (MT) to עַד (prey, a synonym) to עַד (eternal, LXX, Syr).

on the homophones from עד than it is to explain the intrusion of טרף in the MT. If the difference is because of a confusion of the consonants עד, why is the word in the MT so radically different? Reading טרף instead of עד is supported by the other explicit leonine imagery, namely, Yahweh's "lair" (סֻכּוֹ) and "den" (מְעוֹנָתוֹ) in 76:3.[14] Secondly, there are a couple of options when vocalizing the consonants טרף. Though the MT vocalizes this second noun as טָרֶף "prey," Mitchell Dahood suggests a revocalization of טֹרֵף "tearer".[15] The issue with reading אַדִּיר מֵהַרְרֵי־טָרֶף ("mightier than the hills of prey") is that it relegates to the background a potentially significant description of Yahweh's activity by only referring to the product of Yahweh's leonine action. By revocalizing to a participle, the hills belong to Yahweh the lion instead of simply being described as full of game. Vocalizing MT's טָרֶף as טֹרֵף, with Dahood, makes Yahweh the "render" who resides in the hills. Given the leonine imagery employed in Psalm 76, and in another psalms of Asaph (50:22), it would be fitting to have Yahweh described as the subject of the verb (cf. Hos 5:14, כִּי אָנֹכִי כַּשַּׁחַל לְאֶפְרַיִם וְכַכְּפִיר לְבֵית יְהוּדָה אֲנִי אֲנִי אֶטְרֹף; Hos 6:1; Job 16:9). In order to highlight this connection with the lion, the *mem* preposition (מֵהַרְרֵי) should not be read as a comparative ("mightier than the mountains of the tearer"), but as a *mem* of source with אַדִּיר as a divine title ("The Mighty One, from the mountains of the tearer").[16]

The expression הררי־טרף, if revocalized from MT "mountains of prey (טָרֶף)" to "mountains of one who tears (טֹרֵף)," would cast God as a ravenous lion that tears its prey (cf. Hos 5:14; Psa 50:23). By attacking the hill country of Judah, the invaders had actually invaded the haunt of the

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[14] The constellation of these three terms for leonine activity show up in Yahweh's charge to Job, "Can you hunt prey (טָרֶף) for the lion? … when they crouch in their dens (בַּמְּעוֹנוֹת), or dwell in the lair for ambush (בַּסֻּכָּה; Job 38:29)?" Elsewhere in the psalm (76:8), Yahweh is described as "terrifying (נוֹרָא)," and the psalmist proclaims that no one can "stand before you (מִי־יַעֲמֹד לְפָנֶיךָ)." Similar language to this is used in Jer 49:19 to describe the stance of Yahweh's enemies before him as he comes to attack like a lion. In light of this, the description of Yahweh at the beginning of 76:5 (נָאוֹר, brilliant) should be reconstructed as נוֹרָא to fit with the leonine theme of the song.

[15] Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms II*, 219.

[16] The LXX reads the *mem* preposition in this way (ἀπὸ ὀρέων αἰωνίων). For the use of אַדִּיר as an adjective for Yahweh, see Isa 33:21; Psa 93:4. In other Northwest Semitic texts, this word is used as a divine title. In a Phoenician funerary inscription from the Persian period, the dead implores the gods to seek out those who disturb his bones. Cross reconstructs the divine address as: *bqšn hʾdyr wbkl dr* [*bn ʻlm* ("seek him out O (Baʾl) ʾAddir, and with all the assembly of the gods"). Though the divine name, Baʾl, does not occur, the title ʾAddir is enough to imply so, see Frank Moore Cross, "A Recently Published Phoenician Inscription of the Persian Period from Byblos," *IEJ* 29.1 (1979): 41.

divine lion.[17] As the Arameans had hoped to do, the Assyrians found success fighting Yahwists in their approach to the hill country (particularly in the Shephelah), but they encountered difficulties when fighting in their ancestral hills (1 Kgs 20:28, "Yahweh is a god of the hills, and not a god of the plains" אֱלֹהֵי הָרִים יְהוָה וְלֹא־אֱלֹהֵי עֲמָקִים הוּא).[18] This reference to the hills in Psalm 76 may be a way of emphasizing the henotheistic way in which other nations, perhaps Assyria, perceived the territory of Yahweh, and indicates the fate of those who would dare enter the lair of this ferocious lion (cf. Psa 76:3). Sennacherib's armies left the foothills of Judah—the Shephelah—in ruins (2 Kgs 18:13),[19] but did not find the same success in the hill country.

If this is the proper historical location for Psa 76, it is helpful to look at how other contemporary sources from ancient Israel attest to similar imagery. In an insightful article on First Isaiah's place in the Neo-Assyrian literary world, Peter Machinist outlines eight motifs that are present in Isaiah's description of the Assyrian empire and war machine.[20] Though he notes that leonine imagery had a wider currency than just the Neo-Assyrian empire, the presence of these other references to the empire in Isaiah may indicate some sort of connection. Machinist suggests two possible ways these images could be made known and taken up by Isaiah. First, ambassadors since the days of Ahaz (c. 732 BCE) would have taken tribute from Judah to Assyria and would have been exposed to Assyrian propaganda.[21] In fact, one of the words for

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[17] In an inscription from a cave near Khirbet Beit Lai, in the area of Lachish, from either the time of the Assyrian invasion (701 BCE) or the Babylonian destruction (586 BCE), the hills of Judah are listed as God's property: "Yahweh, the God of all the earth, the hills of Judah belong to the God of Jerusalem" (יהוה אלהי כל הארצ הר[י] יהודה לאלהי ירשלם). A number of different readings have been suggested for this text, including a substitution of "cities of" (ערי) instead of "hills of" by Frank Moore Cross. For the different transcriptions of the text, see Shmuel Aḥituv, *Echoes from the Past*, 233-235. If the reading "hills of" stands, it would provide an epigraphic parallel to Yahweh's ownership of the hills in Psa 76:5.

[18] There is a potential comparison of this phenomenon in the royal psalms, where the psalmist confesses trust in the Lord over and against the power of horses and chariots (Pss 20:8; 33:17). This attitude towards warfare technology that cannot be employed in the hills would be maintained by people who mostly confined themselves to the hills.

[19] "Sennacherib's Siege of Jerusalem," trans. Mordechai Cogan, COS 2.119B:302-303.

[20] Peter Machinist, "Assyria and its Image," 719-737. The eight that Machinist mentions are: the journey west for wood (Isa 37:24), devastating and burning settlements (Isa 1:7-8), annexation of territory (Isa 10:13), turning cities into ruins (Isa 37:26b), washing enemies like a flood (Isa 8:7-8), overwhelming enemies with the glory of the king (Isa 8:7-8), king/army of Assyria as a lion (Isa 5:29), and the yoke on captured enemies (Isa 14:25).

[21] Machinist "Assyria and its Image," 730. One letter, from the reign of Sargon II, details the tribute given by various vassal states of the Assyrian empire: "I have received 45 horses of the [pala]ce. The emissaries from Egypt, Gaza, Judah, Moab and Ammon entered Calah on the 12th with their tribute. The 24 horses of the (king) of Gaza are with him. The Edomite, [Ashdo]dite and Ekronite [……]" (*SAA* 1.110).

ambassador in Isaiah, (18:2; צִיר), is a loanword from Akkadian (*ṣāra*, "to come, reach").[22] Second, Assyria could have brought their propaganda directly to Judah or the immediate area, either because of a crisis, or as a part of normal administrative practice.[23] All of the eight examples of Assyrian ideology that Machinist provides can be found in inscriptions outside of Assyria proper in their vassal kingdoms, so the use of these images in Isaiah could stem from those types of texts.[24] No examples of monumental inscriptions have been found in Judah, but they were certainly present in Samaria and Ashdod (though fragmentary), and their lack in Judah could simply be a fate of preservation.

The royal inscriptions that remain today are all written in Akkadian, but we have no way of knowing how much of the royal propaganda was available on perishable material, or communicated through local governors and administrators.[25] That Isaiah uses so many of these images implies that he was familiar with their use in royal ideology, but the exact medium of transference remains a mystery. A large portion of the administration of the Neo-Assyrian empire was done in the Aramaic language, which was more similar to Hebrew than Akkadian, and Isaiah or his disciples may have heard or read formal Assyrian documents in Aramaic, without having to learn Akkadian. Regardless of the means of acquisition, it is evident that these images from Assyrian propaganda were available within Judean scribal culture. Psalm 76, in its use of lion imagery to describe the victor of its battle, probably drew on similar sources in its reinterpretation of a Neo-Assyrian motif. The use of lion imagery for God, the contrast with the Assyrian king, and the avoidance of such usage for the Judahite monarchs, further emphasize the

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[22] Other uses of this word occur in late pre-exilic (Jer 49:14; Ob 1), exilic (Isa 57:9), and sapiential (Pro 13:17) texts. These tribute bearing visits were not only to bolster the imperial coffers, but were also intended to transmit ideology to the ambassadors' home countries, especially Assyria's universal dominion and royal power, see Shawn Zelig Aster, "The Shock of Assyrian Royal Ideology and the Response of Biblical Authors in the Late Eighth Century," in *Archaeology and History of Eight-Century Judah,* ed. Zev I. Farber and Jacob L. Wright (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2018). 478.

[23] Machinist "Assyria and its Image," 731.

[24] For a small sampling of references from monumental texts, see Machinist "Assyria and its Image," 731, n 72. In one inscription from Zinjirli, a vassal kingdom west of the Euphrates in modern day Turkey, Esarhaddon, among other titles, describes himself as a "raging lion" (*RIMA* 4 98 Obv. 24)

[25] One stele, in particular, may have some bearing on the transfer of ideas between Assyria and her vassals. At Tell Fekherye, there is an inscription that has the same text written in both Aramaic and Akkadian from the early 9th c. BCE, Alan Millard and Pierre Bordreuil, "A Statue from Syria with Assyrian and Aramaic Inscriptions," *BA* 45 (1982): 135-141. Though its contents are quite provincial, its dual use of language could be an indication of the Assyrian empire desire to communicate their ideology to their vassals. Fragments of stelae have been found at select sites in Israel (Samaria, Ashdod, Qaqun, and Ben Shemen), which indicate that these were once present in the area (Cogan, *The Raging Torrent*, 231-233).

role of Yahweh as king within the Judean context,[26] and cleverly juxtaposes competing ideologies.[27]

4.3 Psalm 80: Man of the Right Hand

Within the psalms of Asaph, a handful of psalms provide significant insight into the character of the collection. Psalm 80 speaks to a number of the issues raised by this thesis, and it contributes to the greater discussion on multiple levels. At the beginning of the psalm, there is a clear indication that the psalm had an origin in the north, as it refers to Joseph as a political entity (cf. Jud 1:22; 2 Sam 19:21; 1 Kgs 11:28; Amos 5:6; 6:6), and to the three tribes of the western hill country, north of Jerusalem: Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh. Because of its concern for these three tribes—to the exclusion of Judah—this psalm may have existed as an actual text prior to the arrival of the Asaph guild to Jerusalem, perhaps as a national lament after the invasion of Tiglath-Pileser III (cf. 2 Kgs 15:29), or even a somber reflection on Samaria's conquest by Sargon II (2 Kgs 17:5-6). It is difficult to distinguish between inherited traditions and physical texts, but a case could be made that the final version of Psa 80 found here represents an edited text from the north. Undoubtably, Psa 80 become a psalm with a definite function in the Jerusalem temple and a tool for the legitimation of the Davidic king, and this section will argue that it reached its final form during the reign of Hezekiah. It is interesting that many of those scholars who have attempted to find a historical location for this psalm recognize both the

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[26] Strawn, "Whence Leonine Yahweh," 71.

[27] Joel LeMon has connected the description of violence in Psa 76 with a number of iconographic images from the ancient Near East (Joel LeMon, "Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Psalms," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Psalms*, ed. William P. Brown [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014], 377-391. He argues that one line in this psalm (וְלֹא־מָצְאוּ כָל־אַנְשֵׁי־חַיִל יְדֵיהֶם, Psa 76:6) should not be translated metaphorically ("they were unable to use their hands") but literally ("they could not find their hands"). Drawing from depictions of royally mandated violence against enemies by New Kingdom Pharaohs (Tutankhamen and Ramses III) and one Neo-Assyrian king (Shalmaneser III), he notes the motif of cutting off and piling the hands of enemies as a way of "disarming" one's foe and portraying their utter defeat (LeMon, "Ancient Near Eastern," 379-385; cf. Jud 1:6-7). The image in the psalm, then, is that the enemies cannot find their hands because they have been severed and collected. These artistic images of severed body parts reflect the practice of warfare by the Neo-Assyrians, as the Lachish reliefs show a group of soldiers carrying and dumping a number of severed heads into a pile. Excavations from the caves around the tell uncovered the disarticulated skeletons of about 1500 individuals, a mix of men, women, and children, including 695 skulls (David Ussishkin, "Lachish," *ABD* 4 [1992]: 123). This method of engaging in siege and deterring revolt were certainly not isolated, and any other one of the Neo-Assyrian campaigns to the Levant could have included such measures. Describing Yahweh's martial activity in this way parallels the practices of this empire, and parodies the type of claims of victory common on the walls of Sennacherib's palace. If this psalm does find an origin around in the late 8th c., the use of this image for Yahweh's victory would be a powerful counter-image to memories of the brutal Assyrian war machine.

northern and southern elements in the text and have a difficult time reconciling them.[28]

4.3.1 The King and the Vine

About one third of the communal laments in the Psalms are attributed to Asaph, and nearly half of the psalms within the Asaphite collection belong to this *Gattung*.[29] The *Sitz im Leben* for this type of psalm was likely a communal crisis, whether as a result of famine, plague, war, or any other tragedy. Unlike individual laments, which tend to feature confessions of trust, corporate laments instead appeal to Israel's historical traditions as a plea for God to act in the salvific ways that he has in Israel's past.[30] Psalm 80, in particular, belongs to this genre and has two main complaints against God. First, the psalmist invokes the exodus and conquest traditions with viticultural imagery (Psa 80:9, "you drove out the nations and planted [וַתִּטָּעֶהָ] it") reminiscent of the conquest in the Song of the Sea (Exo 15:17, "You will bring them in and plant them [וְתִטָּעֵמוֹ] on your own mountain").[31] To this the psalmist adds a description of the extent of this kingdom (80:12, "It sent out its branches to the Sea [יָם] and its shoots to the River [נָהָר]"), reflecting the idyllic territorial domain of the Davidic king found in the royal psalms (Psa 72:6; 89:25; cp. Zec 9:10).[32] After lamenting the demise of that situation (80:13-14), the psalmist turns his complaint to the institution of the king, who is called both the right hand of God and his son (80:18).[33] The psalmist seems to be especially concerned about the fate of the king, as the refrain typical in the psalm ("Restore us [הֲשִׁיבֵנוּ], O God of Hosts," 80:4, 8, 20) is altered from a *hiphil* to a *qal* when introducing the section on the king so as to dramatically press God himself to act ("Turn again [שׁוּב־נָא], O God of hosts!" 80:15). In both of these complaints, the psalmist implies

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[28] For example, Eduard König takes the tribal references in 80:2 and the LXX superscription ψαλμὸς ὑπὲρ τοῦ Ἀσσυρίου as proof for the song reflecting a northern catastrophe, specifically the invasion of Tiglath-Pileser III (2 Kgs 15:19). However, the references to the ark imply for him that the song was sung in the south by sympathetic Judahites (see the discussion in Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 140).

[29] Pss 9-10, 12, 14, 44, 53, 60, 67, 74, 77, 79, 80, 82, 83, 85, 90, 94, 106, 108, 126, 137, 144 are classified as, or contain significant elements of, communal laments.

[30] Craig Broyles, "Lament, Psalms of," in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry, & Writings*, eds. Tremper Longman III and Peter Enns (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 391.

[31] Compare this with the tradition found in Psa 44:1-4.

[32] The combination of sea and river reflect the geographic polarities in ancient cosmology (Keel, *Symbolism*, 21). Yahweh's charge to his king is not simply to rule over the territory between the Mediterranean and the Jordan (or even the Euphrates), but to exercise dominion over the whole world (Pss 2:7; 89:25).

[33] On the use of the title "Your Right Hand" as a description of the king of Israel (Pss 17:7; 20:7; 60:7; cf. Psa 110:1, see the discussion in Amos Frisch, "ימינך—A Forgotten Title of the King of Israel in the Book of Psalms," *BN* 100 (1999): 5-10.

that God has a continuing obligation, in the face of evidence to the contrary, to both (1) preserve the ideal boundaries of the land, and (2) to ensure that his king remains enthroned and empowered.[34]

The invocation for the king has prompted commentators to find an identification for that individual. Goulder claims that this king should be identified as Hoshea, the last king in Samaria, but it is a stretch to romanticize his reign and he likely did not receive approval by the northern prophet, Hosea (Hos 7:11; cf. 2 Kgs 17:4). Kraus holds that the king in question is Josiah, as he contends that Josiah represented a renewal of the Davidic ideal consistent with this psalm.[35] As stated earlier, part of the problem in this psalm's interpretation is the unique combination of northern and southern features. However, in keeping with the Hezekian program described in other 8th c. sources above, it is not too difficult to imagine an overlapping of north and south in his time. This would take into account the ravaging of the land (80:13-14),[36] perhaps by Assyrian forces, and the central focus on the king as the agent of God's restoration (80:19), especially when compared with Hezekiah's heroic portrayal in the B2 account of Jerusalem's siege (2 Kgs 19:9b-35).[37]

In the final section of the psalm, the congregants begin to directly petition Yahweh concerning their two main concerns: the ruined vine and the threatened dynasty.[38] Yahweh is implored to "attend to" (פָּקַד, Psa 80:15) the vine that is "burned with fire" and "cut down" (80:17), as if he was an absentee gardener who needed to reinspect his work. Beyond merely seeking Yahweh's attention, the singers ask that the unnamed enemies responsible for this tragedy perish at Yahweh's rebuke (80:16). The psalmist then asks that Yahweh turn his

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[34] Broyles, *Psalms*, 331.

[35] Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 143.

[36] Compare the use of similar imagery in Isaiah (Isa 5:5, פָּרֹץ גְּדֵרוֹ) with this psalm (80:13, פָּרַצְתָּ גְדֵרֶיהָ). It is interesting that the imagery moves from describing Israel as a vine to describing Israel as a vineyard, which is the dominant image in Isaiah's allegory.

[37] The description of the Assyrian invasion of Judah in 701 BCE from 2 Kgs 18-19 is best divided into different sources. The first is the annalistic account (A; 2 Kgs 18:13-16), which recounts the invasion in rather laconic fashion and ends with Hezekiah paying tribute to Sennacherib. The second is the prophetic account (B), which is also split further into two separate sources (B1; 2 Kgs 18:17-19:9a, 36-37; B2; 2 Kgs 19:9b-35).

John Hilber also suggests this setting for Psa 80: "Many citizens of Israel sought refuge in Judah/Jerusalem during these war-torn years, and this psalm may have served to reorient their theology and allegiance to the temple and king in Jerusalem" (John Hilber, *Psalms*, The Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009], 73).

[38] The rhetoric of the psalm heightens at this point, with the verb in the familiar refrain (אֱלֹהִים צְבָאוֹת הֲשִׁיבֵנוּ, Psa 80:4, 8) changing from a *hiphil* to a *qal* (אֱלֹהִים צְבָאוֹת שׁוּב־נָא, Psa 80:15).

protection and mercy to the fate of the Davidic king in 80:18 ("the man of your right hand" cf. Psa 2:7; 110:1).[39] The syntax of the concluding vow ("Then we will not turn back from you") implies that Yahweh's restoring action towards the nation and the king are necessary as the basis of their commitment.[40] These two issues clearly define the intent of the psalm as, apart from the introduction (80:1-2) and the refrains (80:4, 8, 15), the psalmist reserves his specific requests until this point ("Attend to this vine," and "May your hand be on the man of your right hand"). A plea for the king is unique among the communal laments, save for Psalm 89:38-45.[41] In his work on communal laments, Paul Ferris claims that the only provable historical situation for a communal lament is the exile and destruction of Jerusalem (74, 79, 89), but surely there were other equally devastating times in Israel's history that could provoke such a composition.[42] The threat posed to both the nation and the dynasty in Psa 89 could point to its origin in the late 8th c. when the armies of Assyria came against Judah and her allies. If this is the case, and if the psalms of Asaph are the products of northerners in the south, it is interesting to note that a primary petition in Psa 80 concerns the king.

If Psa 80 refers to the crises at the end of the 8th c., it provides some interesting parallels with Hezekiah's own prayer over the Assyrian invasion (2 Kgs 19:14-19 // Isa 37:14-19). Both of these prayers invoke the same divine titles (the one "enthroned on the cherubim"[43] and "Yahweh of hosts"[44]) and have similar petitions ("see", "hear", and "save")—factors which imply that both

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[39] The insertion of a similar phrase in 80:16 (וְעַל־בֵּן אִמַּצְתָּה לָּךְ) is likely a dittography from later in the psalm (80:18, עַל־בֶּן־אָדָם אִמַּצְתָּ לָּךְ), as the LXX has identical phrasing between the two (80:16, καὶ ἐπὶ υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου, ὃν ἐκραταίωσας σεαυτῷ; 80:18, καὶ ἐπὶ υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου, ὃν ἐκραταίωσας σεαυτῷ). Without this extra line, the text forms a neat bicolon (וּפְקֹד גֶּפֶן זֹאת // וְכַנָּה אֲשֶׁר־נָטְעָה יְמִינֶךָ), while the added phrase produces an awkward tricolon. If this emendation is correct, the psalmist retains filial language for the king, not the nation personified by the vine.

[40] A final (or purpose) clause, as translated here is usually indicated with a clause initial volitive form, but negative final clauses can be marked by וְלֹא followed immediately by an indicative verb (JM §116j; 168b; cf. Jer 10:4). As is common in communal laments, the psalm appeals to Yahweh's past deeds in light of a present crisis. Psalm 80 implies that, if Yahweh does not continue to preserve and care for his people and his king, there will no longer be a people to praise him.

[41] Fascinatingly, Psa 44 also draws on the Conquest traditions with viticulture imagery ("you planted them" וַתִּטָּעֵם, Psa 44:3), but then explicitly identifies Yahweh as king (אַתָּה־הוּא מַלְכִּי אֱלֹהִים, Psa 44:5). For another communal lament that identifies Yahweh as king, see Psa 10:16.

[42] Paul Wayne Ferris Jr., *The Genre of Communal Lament in the Bible and the Ancient Near East*, SBLDS 127 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 103.

[43] This mythological title for Yahweh in relation to his ark is only found in select places in the Hebrew Bible, perhaps owing to its archaic nature. It is used in the ark narrative (1 Sam 4:4), when David brings the ark to Jerusalem (2 Sam 6:2 // 1 Chr 13:6), when Hezekiah prays before the ark (2 Kgs 19:15 // Isa 37:16), and twice times in the Psalms (80:2; 99:1; cf. 47:1).

[44] In 2 Kgs 19:15, MT reads יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, with which the LXX and Targum Jonathan agree. With the synoptic prayer in Isa 37:16, the Peshitta and Lucian both read a reconstructed יהוה צבאות אלהי ישראל. Given the context of Hezekiah's prayer before the ark, צבאות is the better reading for 2 Kgs 19:15.

were performed in front of the cherubim-ark in the temple at Jerusalem.[45] Most of the other references to Yahweh of Hosts in the Psalms come from songs of Zion (46:7, 11; 48:8; 84:1, 3, 8, 12), royal psalms (89:8), and cultic processionals for the ark (24:10), all of which have a setting in Jerusalem's sanctuary. Psalm 80 represents the only communal lament in the book of Psalms that has any reference to the ark of the covenant,[46] which may indicate that the calamity behind the psalm was indeed dire. Hezekiah's approach to the ark is portrayed as a measure of last resort and, in the psalm, it seems that the community also comes to the ark after having suffered significantly from their enemies. Within the B2 narrative of Jerusalem's defence against Assyria, where Hezekiah is the hero, it was not until Hezekiah brought his prayer before the ark of the covenant that Yahweh turned away the Assyrians. Psalm 80 likewise places the petition for the king at a critical juncture of the psalm. If we take seriously the Jerusalem location of this psalm, regardless of northern themes, it seems that Judah, like the vine, was on the edge of destruction, and the hope for Yahweh's theocratic rule resided precariously—despite the overtures of the Deuteronomist—in the Davidic throne. These two sources represent a similar response (prayer before the ark) to a similar national crisis (the pillaging of land and a dynasty in peril), and are two of the most substantial acts of prayer before the ark in the Hebrew Bible. The ascription of a similar historical setting for these two prayers, therefore, appears entirely reasonable.

4.3.2 Asaph in the Septuagint

The Septuagint preserves two interesting titles for a pair of Asaphite psalms (Pss 76, 80), which appear to comment on their historical location. A number of manuscripts in the LXX (notably from the Coptic, Lucianic, and Old Latin text groups) attest ὕπερ τοῦ Ἀσσυρίου "concerning the Assyrian," as an additional superscription for Psalm 80, while also witnessing πρὸς τὸν Ἀσσὺριον "referring to the Assyrian" in the superscription for Psalm 76. The type of additional superscriptions that appear in the Septuagint that attempt to historicize certain psalms almost always involve events in conjunction with renowned figures from Israel's history, such as

[45] Broyles, "The Psalms and Cult Symbolism," 148.

[46] For a list of psalms that have either overt of oblique references to the ark, see Broyles, "The Psalms and Cult Symbolism," 139-158.

David, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Haggai, and Zechariah.[47] One apocryphal psalm in the Syriac tradition includes a title for Psa 154 that links Hezekiah and the Assyrians in the superscription but is set in a different context than Hezekiah's prayers from canonical texts (2 Kgs 19:15-19; Isa 38:9-20). However, the same psalm is present at Qumran (11Q5 24:3-17) without this superscription, indicating the late origin of its addition. In this case, at least, one cannot argue that the inscription reflects an Iron Age origin, but the sole reference to the "Assyrian" in Pss 76 and 80 remains odd. As mentioned, late superscriptions in the Psalms nearly always involve major figures of Israel's past in scenarios that, as Childs has established, contain midrashic connections between the psalm and the text in reference.[48] The reference to "the Assyrian" stands apart from these, as there are no obvious intertextual connections with the major figures and events of the time, such as Hezekiah's faith or Isaiah's prophetic activity. It is difficult to imagine a reason that a later group would have added a superscription without specific Israelite figures to only these two psalms, which also happen to have potential affinities to the time period it refers to. A case could be made that the reading πρὸς τὸν Ἀσσὺριον in Psa 76 could have come through a series of mistaken readings,[49] but it is difficult to make a similar case for Psa 80.[50] The

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[47] Most of these are with reference to David, and are based on select episodes from 1-2 Samuel, all of which are numbered according to the MT: Psalm 27 ("Before being anointed"), 97 ("When his land was being brought to order"), and the apocryphal psalms 151 ("When he fought against Goliath"), 152 ("After fighting against the lion and the wolf which took sheep from his flocks"), and 153 ("After receiving God's grace when he delivered him from the lion and wolf and those two he killed by his hands"). Others are included in this effort, as Psalm 96 purports to be for "When the house of God was being rebuilt after captivity," and Haggai and Zechariah also enjoy positions in superscriptions in some manuscripts of Pss 111; 112; 138; 139; 146-150. Jeremiah and Ezekiel share an inscription in Psa 65.

[48] Childs, "Psalm Titles," 137-150. One exception is the assignment of four psalms to different days of the week, in keeping with the tradition in the Second Temple period of having a certain psalm for each day (m. Tamid 7:4). Those attested in the LXX Psalter are Sunday (Psa 24), Monday (Psa 48), Wednesday (Psa 94), and Sabbath (Psa 92).

[49] The MT's שִׁיר לְאָסָף would be the original reading, which by confusion of the syllabants שׁ and ס was reduced to לְאָשִׁיר. As these letters do not produce an intelligable lexeme, the י was read as a ו, producing לְאָשׁוּר. This reading was then harmonized with the majority text to create the doublet now found in some Greek manuscripts of 76:1 (τῷ Ασαφ, ᾠδὴ πρὸς τὸν Ἀσσύριον = לְאָסָף שִׁיר לְאָשׁוּר). For evidence that the phonemes *sin* and *šin* could be confused in the late pre-exilic period, see Ronald Hendel, "Sibilants and *šibbolet* (Judges 12:6)," *BASOR* 301 (1996): 69-75. Based on the difference between the name of an Ammonite king represented in an Ammonite seal (למלכמאור עבד בעלישע) and a reference in Jeremiah to that king (Jer 40:14, בַּעֲלִיס מֶלֶךְ בְּנֵי־עַמּוֹן), Hendel argues that there were different regional realizations of the phoneme *š* between Cis- and Transjordan. This sort of dialectal difference may lie behind the potential silibant interchange proposed here.

[50] The link that made the reconstruction for Psa 76:1 possible was the similarity between שִׁיר and אָשׁוּר, but Psa 80 is called a מִזְמוֹר, not a שִׁיר. A scribe may have read לאשור, or a *plene* לאשר, and simply omitted what appeared to be a relative clause. Complicating this suggestion is that the LXX does not elsewhere use the preposition ὑπέρ in the "authorial" superscriptions with the preposition ל.

uniqueness of these two superscriptions, and their surprising accuracy, may therefore preserve a memory of the genesis of these two psalms.

4.3.3 A Mix of Sun and Cloud

Solar imagery is present in this psalm, but it appears to mix with storm imagery. Within the collection in question, Yahweh is summoned to "shine forth" (הוֹפִיעָה) in 80:2, and in another psalm of Asaph (50:2). Most of the implications for a solar orientation in these psalms depend on the meaning of the word יפע, but cognate literature from Ugaritic does not provide much guidance for this exact form, as the word does not appear in the causative stem, like Hebrew יפע. The texts from Ugaritic show that the root in the G stem had the original meaning of "to rise up," which then developed in Hebrew to include the idea of "shining," perhaps when applied to the sun's rising.[51] Akkadian provides a much better match for Hebrew יפע, as (*w*)*apû* is found in the causative (Š) and causative reflexive (Št) stems.[52] This verb can refer to the creation and appearance of the gods ("When none of the gods had yet appeared [*šu-pu-u*]," Enuma Elish I 7), and in the passive form can refer to the sun god "shining forth" ("Wherever Shamash shines forth [*uš-tap-pa-a*], and the fire god flares up," Ludlul IV 38). In the code of Hammurapi (40:88), the verb is used for the appearance of Shamash's justice, perhaps as a reflection of the sun's character ("May my justice be promulgated [*li-iš-te-pi*] in the land"). Like Akkadian, the Hebrew word is used in theophanic contexts which suggest references to the sun (Deut 33:2;[53]

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[51] Frederick L. Moriarty, "A Note on the Root YPʿ," *CBQ* 14 (1952): 62. In the third act of the Ba'al Cycle (KTU 1.5.4.8), where Mot challenges Ba'al, El summons Ba'al to the divine council: "Where then is Ba'al …? Where is Hadd …?", and Ba'al then "arises" (*ynpʿ bʿl*). The context does not appear to be theophanic, and could just indicate that Ba'al "arose" to go to El (cp. KTU 1.19.2.16-17: Let the stalks shoot up [*ynpʿ*] in the brush, the wild plants sprout [*ypʿ*] in the thicket). Like Hebrew קום, one could "rise against" their enemy (KTU 1.3.4.5, *l ʾib ypʿ l bʿl*). There is a personal theophoric name in Ugaritic that combines this verb with the name Ba'al (*ypʿbʿl*, KTU 4.116; 4.754.13), for which "Ba'al will arise" would be an appropriate translation (cp. יָקְמְיָה in 1 Chr 2:41). None of these contain light or solar imagery, and the verb in Ugaritic is better translated simply as "to rise" (cp. Arb *yafaʿa* to grow and II יפע in HALOT 423). It should be noted again that none of these are attested in the causative stem (Š), while Hebrew יפע is found exclusively in the *hiphil*.

[52] CAD 1.2:201-204. The following translations were all provided within the lexical entry for (*w*)*apû* in the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary.

[53] In Moses' blessing, Yahweh "dawned" (זָרח) from Seir, in the east, and "shone" (הוֹפִיעַ) from Mount Paran (Deut 33:2). Other elements in this text draw from the God of the Skies tradition, but this introduction suggests an equivocal mixture between the two. In Habakuk 3, Yahweh comes from similar territory (Teman and Paran), and is described as one coming in light ("His brightness was like the light").

Psa 94:1[54]). It is it not hard to imagine how an original Semitic root "to rise" could become associated, by means of the causative stem, with a deity's action of making the sun rise. Both Hebrew and Akkadian show a parallel development of this word from "rise up" in the G stem towards "shine forth" that evidently did not take place in Ugaritic.

Despite this development to "shining" and its association with the sun, it is difficult to distinguish the image of light from either the sun rays of a solar deity or the lightning of a storm god.[55] Elsewhere in Psalm 80, Yahweh is implored to "make his face shine" in the three refrains (80:4, 8, 19), and to "look down from heaven" in the rhetorically revised refrain. Seeing the shining face of a superior, even a god, probably comes from Egyptian influence in the Levant, either in the LB or during the 8th c., which equated the king with the sun god (cp. KTU 2.16.6-10).[56] Mitchell Dahood makes the case that God's absence is the cause that precipitated the national calamity in the psalm, and that the solution is for him to come again in "the bright light of his theophanic presence."[57] Given these other uses of luminous or solar, rather than storm, imagery, the psalmist understood the light emanating from Yahweh's "shining forth" as an image paralleled by the sun's own brilliance. However, this is not to say that storm imagery is not present in the psalm, as the traditions behind the ark and the "Lord of Hosts" as ruler of the Council of Heaven is closely tied to the thunderous, martial theophany of Yahweh (Num 10:35-36; 1 Kgs 22:19-21; Psa 18:10; 24:10). The "hosts" of Yahweh's armies indeed consist of the heavenly bodies (Jud 5:20)—including the sun—, the closest parallels from Ugarit have El as the head of the pantheon, not the solar deity, and Shapshu himself was a subordinate member of

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[54] It is hard to deny that Psa 94 uses solar imagery. In the Mesopotamian tradition, Shamash was responsible for the establishment and administration of justice—images which come from the sun's penetrating character and its watchful gaze over all of man's daytime activities. His judicial role is best seen when he bestows to Hammurapi the law on the stele of Hammurapi's code. In 94:1-7, Yahweh is described as a "God of vengeance" (94:1) and the "Judge of the earth" (94:2); he is charged with caring for the vulnerable in society; and the wicked mock God by saying that he "cannot see" (94:7). At the beginning of the psalm, Yahweh, as the God of Justice, is asked to "shine forth" (הוֹפִיעַ).

[55] Job 37:15 presents such an equivocal situation, though the context may relate it to solar imagery ("He makes the light of his cloud shine forth [הוֹפִיעַ]).

[56] In both of these time periods, the southern Levant saw an increase in Egyptian involvement in political affairs. In KTU 2.16.6-10, Talmiyanu speaks to his mother Thariyelli concerning his audience before the king at Ugarit: *ʾumy tdʿ ky ʿrbt lpn špš wpn špš nr by mʾid,* "My mother, you must know that I have entered before the Sun and the face of the Sun shone upon me greatly."

[57] Dahood, *Psalms II*, 256.

El's council (KTU 15.2.2-7).[58] Something similar likely obtained for Yahweh's own council. It should come as no surprise that, even when solar imagery is present to describe Yahweh, it is not to the exclusion of all other religious language. Granted, Yahweh's worshippers often made distinctions between Yahweh and other gods, but the range of natural, social, and cosmic descriptors for Yahweh assimilate those attributed to various other deities, such as El, Baal, and Shamash.[59] The land of ancient Israel was, after all, at the crossroads of a number of competing political, economic, and even religious influences, and the conflation of divine epithets and identities is an expected outcome of these forces.[60]

In the late 8th c., solar imagery in Judah's iconography began to increase, likely as a result of both Assyrian and Egyptian (Isa 30:2) influence.[61] In their analysis of the various forms of iconography, Keel and Uehlinger note that it was not until the 7th c. that a critical stance towards such images is noticeable, and that in the 8th c. these symbols were standard and acceptable. One of the most significant solar images is from the *lmlk* seals of the late 8th c., which date to the reign of Hezekiah. The *lmlk* seals had the epigram *lmlk* with one of two images: a two-winged solar disk, or a four winged scarab—both of which borrow from Egyptian images for the sun and draw special attention to its rising.[62] Other solar features are evident in personal seals.[63] One example from Hezekiah's era is a bulla from one of Hezekiah's ministers (עבד חזקיהו; see 2 Kgs

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[58] E. Theodore Mullin Jr., *The Assembly of the Gods in Canaanite and Early Hebrew Literature*, HSM 24 (Chico, CA: Scholar's Press, 1980), 194-196.

[59] Smith, *The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities of Ancient Israel* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990), 161-163.

[60] For an non-Israelite example of a combination of sun and storm god imagery from the Late Bronze Age in the southern Levant, see the El-Amarna correspondence from Rib Hadda, ruler of Byblos (EA 108 7-8), and Abimilki, king of Tyre (EA 147 5-15; 149 6-9); esp. EA 149 6-7: "O king, my lord, you are like the sun god, like the storm god in heaven!" (Anson F. Rainey, *The El-Amarna Correspondence: A New Edition of the Cuneiform Letters from the Site of El-Amarna based on Collations of all Extant Tablets*, ed. William Schniedewind and Zipora Cochavi-Rainey, HdO 110 [Leiden: Brill, 2015], 753). Evidently, this mixture was not restricted to Israel. Psalm 104, as is frequently noted, has numerous parallels with the Hymn to the Aten (cf. "The Great Hymn to Aten," trans. Miriam Lichtheim [COS 1.28:45-46]), especially in Psa 104:19-24. Despite this use of solar worship, it is interesting that the psalm begins with storm god imagery, as Yahweh makes clouds his "chariot" and rides "on the wings of the wind" (104:3), and includes references to a storm god's conflicts with the sea (104:6-7) and Leviathan (104:26). Though the Psalms (and the Hebrew Bible) do use natural imagery to describe Yahweh in ways similar to other deities, the fact that he is not restricted to one specific image allows him to fill in the gaps that accompany that one image, and worshippers are free to run the gamut of metaphorical expression in their praise and prayer towards one god, Yahweh.

[61] Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses*, 272. Keel and Uehlinger document how Judah increasingly took on Egyptian religious motifs in their glyptic art, especially in the representation of the winged *uraei* and sun symbolism.

[62] Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses*, 277.

[63] Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses*, 274-276.

22:12) with the name יהוזרח "Yahweh has arisen."[64] Elsewhere in the ancient world, solar imagery would be applied to otherwise non-solar deities, such as Asshur in Assyria, Marduk in Babylon, and El in Ugarit.[65] The assimilations of attributes of the sun to other gods was often royally mandated, and served to cement the god as the national deity. There is hardly a more universal religious symbol than the sun, and Hezekiah's application of solar language to Yahweh could have been one part of his centralization program. Given these circumstances during Hezekiah's reign, it is perhaps no surprise that this psalm features a number of literary images that draw on the image of the sun.

4.4 Psalm 83: Nations Gathered

Psalm 83 is another communal lament within the Asaphite collection that describes in detail the various nations that come against Israel in order to "remove them from being a nation" (83:5). It is difficult to find a corresponding event in Israel's history when all of these nations conspired together, as the psalm appears to summarize the various enemies that the nation has ever had. Nine local entities are first named, after which Assyria follows. Scribes in ancient Egypt would often represent all the nations subject to the king, and who were regarded as hostile, by a pictorial display of nine bows underneath the feet of the Pharaoh.[66] Kings would be shown in a position of conquest over these nine bows to show their ability to defeat chaos and preserve order and, if this is the background to these nine nations listed in Psalm 83, there is an implicit plea for Yahweh to act in the same order-establishing way.[67] Syntactically, Assyria sits apart from the rest of these nine groups as the worst offender of all with an emphatically placed conjunction (גַּם־אַשּׁוּר).[68] Its presence apart from the other nine nations indicates the special and

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[64] Naḥman Avigad, *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals*, revised and completed by Benjamin Sass (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1997), 172-173. Names formed from זָרַח are found in Judahite and Edomite sources (cf. Gen 36:13, 17), indicating the close connection between the religious symbolism of the two, and the validity of the traditions where Yahweh arises from Paran (Deut 33:2; Hab 3:3), Teman (Hab 3:3), and Seir (Deut 33:2; Jud 5:4). One plaster writing from Kuntillet Ajrud also uses similar terminology (בזרח אל) for a theophany (Aḥituv, *Echoes from the Past*, 324). Like this psalm, this piece conflates storm, solar, and martial imagery, and even uses the name בעל for Yahweh.

[65] Smith, *The Early History of God*, 120.

[66] Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 255.

[67] Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 342.

[68] The Psalms Targum specifically identifies Sennacherib with this Assyrian threat (לחוד סנחריב מלכא דאתור איתחבר עימהון, "Also *Sennacherib king of* Assyria *was allied* with them").

unique threat it presented to the order established by Yahweh. This inclusion of Assyria would have to be when they were the main antagonist in Israel's history, which could be anywhere in the 8th c.- 7th c. BCE.

In keeping with the appeal in communal laments to God's past actions as a motivator for divine deliverance, the psalmist asks that God do to them as he did to the enemies of Deborah (Sisera and Jabin, 83:9-10) and Gideon (Oreb, Zeeb, Zebah, and Zalmunna; 83:9, 11). These events from the book of Judges (Deborah, Jud 4-5; Gideon Jud 6-9) are both set within the northern arena, and would have been transmitted in northern circles of tradition. For this reason, it is striking that the few other times that these traditions, and Midian in particular, are used in later texts is in First Isaiah, where the prophet uses it to highlight the drawing in of the remnant of northern Israel (Isa 9:4; 10:26).[69] Both of these texts were mentioned above in their connection with Hezekiah's policy of inclusion towards the northern diaspora. By using this figure from the Judges cycle, Isaiah's message would have had a strong rhetorical effect on a northern audience.[70] Similarly, it would seem that by comparing the hoped-for defeat of Israel's enemies, and especially Assyria, with these historic northern enemies the psalmist would be communicating to an audience with ties to the north. Nevertheless, as shown in a section 2.5.1.2, there are also southern geographic features in this psalm (Edom, Philistia; 83:7-8), though much less prominent than the northern. Defining an exact date to this psalm would be tentative, as the Assyrians frequently came to the southern Levant for battle, but its historical location in a mixed northern and southern environment could focus the date onto the late 8th c. - early 7th c. BCE.

[69] The other being Samuel's parting address in 2 Sam 12. Nasuti labels this as a Deuteronomic "credo" and representative of northern traditions (Nasuti, *Tradition History*, 113).

[70] Nasuti also notes that both of these Isaianic passages speak of the removal of a yoke from the shoulders as an image of freedom and release (9:4; 10:27), which is language that is also found in a psalm of Asaph (81:7). He was able to recognize a number of points of overlap between the Isaianic material and the psalms of Asaph, but admitted that he was not able to reconcile these connections with the fact that they come from different tradition streams (one Ephraimite, one Jerusalemite; Nasuti, *Tradition History*, 105).

As with Psalm 80, there are also echoes between Psalm 83 and Hezekiah's prayer from the second prophetic account in 2 Kgs 18-19 (B2).[71] When asking for salvation from the Assyrians, Hezekiah's appeal to God is that, if accomplished, all the nations would know that Yahweh alone is God (2 Kgs 19:19). Undoubtedly, this provides a tight parallel in the narrative with the Assyrian envoy's taunt that no other gods were able to stand up to the Assyrian war machine (B1 2 Kgs 18:33; B2 Kgs 19:12). In like manner, in response to the mass of nations conspiring against Israel in Psalm 83, the psalmist calls on God to defeat these nations so that these nations would know that Yahweh alone is the Most High over all the earth (83:19). Both the appeals by Hezekiah and the Psalmist in 83 have a conglomerate of nations as the subject of ידע, have a similar introductory clause (כִּי אַתָּה), indicate Yahweh's uniqueness (לְבַדֶּךָ), and, strikingly in the Elohistic Psalter, emphasize the divine name, יהוה.[72] As a way to motivate Yahweh to action, both of these prayers appeal to the recognition among the nations that Yahweh is God alone, if only Yahweh would act on behalf of the supplicant. Among the various motivations in Israel's prayers for Yahweh to act, this form ("that they may know") appears only a handful of times (1 Sam 17:46; 1 Kgs 18:37; Psa 46:11; 59:14: 109:27). Of these, Elijah's prayer is similar to the two in discussion (וְיֵדְעוּ הָעָם הַזֶּה כִּי־אַתָּה יְהוָה הָאֱלֹהִים), but the audience is Israel, not the nations, and the qualifier "alone" is not stated. A better example is found in Psa 46:11, where a spokesperson for Yahweh, perhaps a prophet, says, "Be still and know that I [Yahweh] am God, I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in all the earth," but, still, there is no notion that Yahweh

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[71] The two prophetic traditions concerning the salvation of Jerusalem (B1, 2 Kgs 18:17-19:9a, 36-37; B2, 2 Kgs 19:9b-35) differ in important respects. The former (B1) has Hezekiah, as a good Deuteronomic king (Deut 18:15-22), asking the prophet Isaiah to intercede on behalf of the kingdom and, like all true prophets, Isaiah's oracle of salvation stands (2 Kgs 19:36-37). Both prophet and king in this version of the story act according to the molds set by Deuteronomic traditions. The latter (B2) has a shortened version of the Rabshekah's speech, which highlights the peril approaching the Davidic king and the city of Jerusalem (2 Kgs 19:9b-13)—both of which were crucial for Zion's royal ideology. In response, Hezekiah himself goes to the temple and prays for Jerusalem's salvation, after which he receives an oracle from the prophet Isaiah. R.R. Wilson has noted that the former account was more in line with Deuteronomic editorial techniques, while the second is more consonant with a native Jerusalem setting (Wilson, *Prophecy and Society*, 218).

[72] Dahood notes that the independent pronoun אַתָּה can act as an intensifier for the pronominal suffix on שְׁמֶךָ "your own name" (*Psalms II,* 277; GKC 135e; cf. Gen 49:8 יְהוּדָה אַתָּה יוֹדוּךָ אַחֶיךָ "Judah, your brothers will praise you, even you"). In the translation provided, I have attempted to indicate this by setting the central clause in apposition to the rest.

alone should be exalted.[73] It appears that 2 Kgs 19:19 and Psa 83:17 want to specifically emphasize, in the context of warfare, that other gods have no place in Yahweh's rule and, at least in the case of 2 Kings 19:19, mock the authority of their enemies' gods. As before with the connections in Psalm 80, this association with Hezekiah could be indicative of standard forms for prayer, but the verbal connections, the almost identical construction, and the earlier emphasis on Assyria (גַּם־אַשּׁוּר) hints at more than just a serendipitous link.

2 Kings 19:19 // Isa 37:20	**Psalm 83:17**
וְיֵדְעוּ כָּל־מַמְלְכוֹת הָאָרֶץ כִּי אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים לְבַדֶּךָ	וְיֵדְעוּ כִּי־אַתָּה שִׁמְךָ יְהוָה לְבַדֶּךָ עֶלְיוֹן עַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ
That they (all the kingdoms of the earth) may know that you, Yahweh, alone are God.	That they [all the kingdoms] may know that you,—whose name is Yahweh—alone are Most High over all the earth.

Baruch Levine argues that the development of Israel's monotheism was influenced by the universal theo-political claims of the Assyrian empire.[74] The growth of the Assyrian empire took place on both a territorial and theological plane and, as the empire expanded, the Assyrians believed that the gods of smaller and lesser nations had abandoned their people before the divine forces of Assyria (cp. 2 Kgs 18:33-34; 19:12-13).[75] A henotheistic Yahweh, happily protecting his own people, was not sufficient in the face of this ideology. By sparing Jerusalem in 701 BCE, Yahweh proved that it was, in fact, the gods of Assyria who had abandoned their people, not Yahweh. First Isaiah portrays Yahweh as sovereign even over the decisions of the Assyrian king

[73] 1 Samuel 17:46 asks that all the earth (כָּל־הָאָרֶץ) would know that Israel has a God (כִּי יֵשׁ אֱלֹהִים לְיִשְׂרָאֵל); in Psa 59:14, the psalmist asks that his enemies in far off places (לְאַפְסֵי הָאָרֶץ) would know that God rules in Jacob (כִּי־אֱלֹהִים מֹשֵׁל בְּיַעֲקֹב); and Psa 109:27 asks that the adversaries of the psalmist would recognize that their punishment is from the hand of God (כִּי־יָדְךָ זֹאת אַתָּה יְהוָה עָשִׂיתָהּ). Though all three of these ask that their enemies would know more about Israel's God (that Yahweh is a God to Israel [1 Sam 17:46], that Yahweh rules in Jacob [Psa 59:14], or that he punishes the wicked [Psa 109:27]), none of them make exclusive claims about Yahweh's relative position among the gods, as do the two petitions in question. Psalm 97:9 has a similar turn of phrase to these two verses, but the parallel line states that Yahweh is exalted over all of the gods (מְאֹד נַעֲלֵיתָ עַל־כָּל־אֱלֹהִים, "You are highly exalted over all gods"), which lacks the "alone" feature described above.

[74] Baruch Levine, "Assyrian Ideology and Israelite Monotheism," *Iraq* 67 (2005): 411-427.

[75] For other examples in the Assyrian literature, see Mordechai Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion: Assyria, Judah and Israel in the Eighth and Seventh Centuries B.C.E.* SBLMS 19 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1974), 9-15. Shawn Zelig Aster outlines three critical components of Neo-Assyrian royal ideology: the dominion of Asshur, the power of the king, and the boundless reach of the empire (Shawn Zelig Aster, "The Shock of Assyrian Royal Ideology and the Response of Biblical Authors in the Late Eighth Century," *Archaeology and History of Eight-Century Judah*, ed. Zev I. Farber and Jacob L. Wright [Atlanta: SBL Press, 2018], 477). In this system, the identity and function of the king was tightly linked with the will and desire of Asshur. The more that the king of Assyria asserted their dominance on the world stage and reigned victorious, the more their god was considered the *de facto* head of a global pantheon.

and, notably, does not portray Judah's conflict with Assyria as a battle of the gods.[76] There are no "other gods" (Exo 20:3) to contend with, and there is no contest with Assyria's gods, as there was with Baal (1 Kgs 18:37). The haughty king of Assyria is merely an instrument in Yahweh's hands (Isa 10:5-11), and Yahweh—not Asshur—stands above the decisions of the empire. The critical difference between the pleas of Elijah (to know that Yahweh is God) and Hezekiah (to know that Yahweh is God, *alone*) may reflect the different political and social environment between the two of them. In the contest of divine power, Israel's conception of Yahweh's status had to be at least as high as that accorded to Asshur. Psalm 82, another psalm of Asaph, says something very similar in its denigration of all deities besides the God of Israel to the level of man (82:7). In this context, Psa 83:19 would be very much at home in a Neo-Assyrian environment. This is not to say that Psa 83 and the prayer of Hezekiah represent the same historical act of prayer before the ark, but they both uniquely share similar literary motifs, *Sitz im Leben*, and social function. The relative dating of these two prayers cannot be far apart.

4.5 Psalm 76: A Song of Zion

There is a wide recognition among form critics that Psalm 76 belongs to the genre of the "Songs of Zion."[77] These psalms do not belong to a formal category per se, but are a subset of hymns that contain a number of common themes, much like how royal psalms are determined from more general form categories. This group of psalms emphasize Zion as the space that Yahweh has chosen to inhabit, and usually espouse the notion of Zion's inviolability and the absolute protection afforded to it by Yahweh. The mythology surrounding Yahweh's relationship to Zion has deep roots in the West Semitic world, and may even have been inherited from the city's earlier Canaanite inhabitants. When examined within this context, it is clear that these psalms are an extension of the "God of the Skies" legend evident in the Baal epic from Ugarit, where Baal defeats the raging, personified sea (Yamm) and then takes up residence in his mountain temple. These mythic descriptions of the sea and Yahweh's mountaintop residence are found throughout these psalms (e.g. 46:3-6; 48:2-4; 87:1). The name of Baal's mountain, Mt.

[76] Levine, "Assyrian Ideology," 422.

[77] They are found especially in 46, 48, 84, and 87, with some elements of this tradition found in Psa 132:13-18 (Broyles, *Psalms*, 39).

Zaphon (modern Jebel el-ʾAqra), is alluded to in Psalm 48, where Zion is called the "far reaches of the north/Zaphon" (יַרְכְּתֵי צָפוֹן, Psa 48:3), and from where Zion witnesses the breaking of ships by wind (Psa 48:8). These references apply more readily to Mt. Zaphon, along the coast of the northern Levant, than they do to landlocked Jerusalem. Nevertheless, these images of the West Semitic divine mountain are co-opted and applied to the mount of Yahweh's temple in Jerusalem. Zion, in effect, becomes the new Zaphon.

These Zion traditions concerning the defeat of the nations would have become especially relevant during particular times of Jerusalem's existence, but it is difficult to determine a specific origin for the date of composition for these Songs of Zion. Occasionally, the dating assigned to these psalms is some time around the pyrrhic victory obtained by Judah in Hezekiah's war with Sennacherib (c. 701 BCE).[78] However, most recent commentators date the Zion tradition early, to the previous Canaanite occupants before David's capture of the city, and place the genre in a temple *Sitz im Leben*, rather than as a victory hymn.[79] Psalms scholars would certainly date these psalms before the time of Hezekiah, though most would suggest at least the time of David.[80] John Day notes Isaiah's presupposition of this Zion tradition (e.g. 7:14; 14:32; 18:7; 29:8; 31:4-9) as an implication that the Songs of Zion antedate the prophet.[81] Zion is a dominant theme in First Isaiah, and the out-workings of a theology concerning Yahweh's relationship with Jerusalem would have found a ready audience around the threat to and preservation of Jerusalem in 701 BCE, especially since later references in Jeremiah and Lamentations are negative.[82] They may have been used on the occasion of Zion's deliverance in 701 BCE, but their primary objective was to celebrate Yahweh's election of Zion as his abode, which precludes a specific date.[83]

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[78] John Bright, *History of Ancient Israel*, 294-298.
[79] Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 109.
[80] e.g. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 342-344.
[81] Day, *God's Conflict*, 125-138.
[82] Within the canon of the Hebrew Bible, the two places where references to Zion abound are the Psalms (38x) and First Isaiah (29x), which account for about 44% of all occurrences. Writings from the late pre-exilic period (Jeremiah, Lamentations) devalue the significance attributed to Zion in First Isaiah. For the prophet Jeremiah, they had become a blank cheque for licentiousness and improper worship (esp. in Jeremiah's temple sermon, 7:1-15). This does not necessarily represent a diachronic development in the official ideology in Jerusalem, but could indicate the social background from which Jeremiah, a Levitical priest from Anathoth, is speaking from.
[83] Broyles, *Psalms*, 24.

4.5.1 *Chaoskampf* and *Völkerkampf*

One significant departure in the Songs of Zion from the Ugaritic myth is the historicization of the *Chaoskampf* motif, which describes how Baal defeats the chaotic sea before establishing his residence on Zaphon. Mount Zion, unlike Zaphon, is not a towering or imposing geological feature, even in relation to the hills around it;[84] but, by virtue of it being the location of Yahweh's city and temple, it became the *axis mundi*. Nor is it, like Jebel el-ʾAqra, a distant and separate mountain from human communities, but is actually in and among the people who venerate it—Yahweh's home is not a mountain on the horizon, but the mountain on which his temple was built and around which his people live. Because of this location, the mythology surrounding Yahweh's mountain began to incorporate urban concerns that are absent from the Ugaritic myth, specifically the threat of attack from earthly enemies.[85] Therefore, in Psalm 48, just as the seas would "roar" (חמה) and "foam" (מוט) against a storm god (46:4), the nations "roar" (חמה) and "totter" (מוט) against Yahweh in Zion (46:7).[86] In other words, the *Chaoskampf* motif from West Semitic myth is expanded with an urban application in the *Völkerkampf* motif from the Songs of

[84] The hill where the temple was constructed sits at a relatively low 735m above sea level. Most of the hills around it, such as the Mount of Olives (811m), Mt. Scopus (823m), and the western hill (765m), are all higher, and only the city of David (675m) sits lower than Zion. Compare this with Jebel el-ʾAqra, which rises to 1709m overlooking the Mediterranean sea, or even Mt. Hermon, whose highest point is 2814m. These data were not lost on the ancient Israelites, as some psalmists exploited this observation when describing Zion: "As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds his people" (Psa 125:2), "I lift my eyes up to the hills, where does my help come from" (Psa 121:1).

[85] It is true that in most Semitic myths, the main temple for the deity is the bridge between the mythic realm of the gods and their worshippers. In some sense, Baal's enthronement in his epic from Ugarit could have been understood to have happened in his physical temple just as much as it did in his cosmic temple, much like Marduk at Babylon in the *Enuma Elish* (cf. "The Creation Epic," ANET 69). However, these connections are not made explicit in the Baal epic, and the geographic location for the events of the epic appears to focus on the heights of Mt. Zaphon, not the urban centre of Ugarit.

[86] Again, First Isaiah provides great examples of this Zion theology, as Isa 17:12-14 compares the "roaring" of the nations to that of the "roaring" of the sea ("And the roaring of the peoples is like the roar of mighty, roaring waters" וּשְׁאוֹן לְאֻמִּים כִּשְׁאוֹן מַיִם כַּבִּירִים יִשָּׁאוּן).

Zion and elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible.[87] The impetus for this connection derives from the collapse of the distinction between Yahweh's divine mountain and the mount on which his holy temple stood.

Both Psalm 46 and 48 are notable for the way in which they blend these two aspects of the Zion ideology.[88] The city of God is fed by the river of paradise (46:5), God keeps the chaotic waters away from the city (46:4-5), Mount Zion is an imposing, tall mountain (48:3), Zion has become Zaphon (48:3),[89] and God, as king, dwells here (48:3); however, both of these psalms see enemies drawing near and perishing before the God of this city (46:7, 10; 48:5-8). The prophet in First Isaiah was also fond of this connection, as he often compared the coming Assyrian threat with the chaotic and destructive waters of the sea (cf. Isa 8:5-10; 17:12-14; 30:27-33; 33:20-24).[90] Psalm 76, on the other hand, does not expound on the city of Zion, nor the mountain itself, but only deals with Yahweh's defeat of the nations (76:4-7). The elements of the city (46:5; 48:3; 87:1; 122:1-4) and mountain/temple (46:5; 48:2-3; 84:2-3; 87:1; 132:14) found frequently in other Songs of Zion are missing, and Zion is only the place that Yahweh launches his attack against his enemies. The communal imperatives at the end of both Pss 46 and 48 also differ from Psa 76: the former call on the people to come to Jerusalem to see God's activity in Zion (46:9) or to inspect the city's integrity (48:13-14), while Psa 76 is explicitly cultic in nature (76:12). These

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[87] Noteworthy is the way in which this theme a framing device for the Psalter, with Pss 2 and 149 describing the "raging" of the nations and Yahweh's judgment on them.

The closest thing to this *Völkerkampf* theme in the Ugaritic texts is the brutal martial activity of the goddess Anat in KTU 1.3.2.3-30. It is only in Anat's battle that human enemies come to fight against the goddess at the divine mountain, while the same scenario does not obtain for Baal (Mark Smith and Wayne Pitard, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle: Introduction with Text, Translation and Commentary of KTU/CAT 1.3-1.4,* SuppVT 114 [Leiden: Brill, 2009], 150-151). In the Aqhat tablets, (KTU 1.1.4.8-10), Anat is even commanded by Baal to desist from war and reign in her violence against humanity. There is an episode in the Baal Epic where Baal marches through villages and towns in a victory processional, but these inhabitants appear to already be his subjects (KTU 1.4.7.9-12). Throughout these examples, there is no indication that the people who fight against the gods are equated with the forces of the sea, as in the Zion hymns from the Psalms, nor are terrestrial issues really a central focus of the myth, which focuses more on Baal's actions and struggles in the divine realm. The merger of the two forces (sea=nations) is a uniquely Israelite innovation.

[88] Psalm 87, an exilic or post-exilic song of Zion, transforms this motif into the gathering of the nations to worship at Zion. For similar themes in other post-exilic literature, see Isa 56:3-8; Zech 8:22-23; 14:16-19.

[89] Heb. צָפוֹן is a common word for "north" in biblical Hebrew, but its use as such comes from the presence of a prominent mountain, Zaphon, in the far north, much in the same way as נֶגֶב and יָם are used as direction indicators for south and west, respectively. It is relatively common (390x), but in three other cases it may refer to Zaphon in the north (Psa 89:13; Isa 14:13; Job 26:7; cf. Dahood, *Psalms I*, 290).

[90] To these could be added the connection between the name Immanuel ("God with us") in Isaiah 7:14 with the statements of confidence in Psa 46:8, 12 ("The Lord of Hosts is with us"). For other uses of the inviolability of Zion theme in Isaiah, see 10:27b-34; 14:24-27; 29:1-8; 31:1-9.

city-focused commands probably had a place in a pilgrimage setting, but the simple request in Psa 76:12 to "repay vows" and that all around should "bring gifts" may place Psa 76 in a more settled *Sitz im Leben* within the cultic apparatus. Unlike Pss 46 and 48, Yahweh is not explicitly localized to this specific space, as he judges from the heavens (Psa 76:9), nor does Yahweh act on behalf of his sacred mountain, but in judicial action (לַמִּשְׁפָּט) for the sake of כָּל־עַנְוֵי־אֶרֶץ "all the poor of the land" (76:10). Psalm 76 exclusively discusses the *Völkerkampf* aspect of the myth, to the exclusion of the mythic *Chaoskampf*.

Given that the *Chaoskampf* themes from the Songs of Zion are ancient, and were likely incorporated from Canaanite, or even Jebusite, sources, perhaps the absence of such themes can help chronologically distinguish Psa 76 from the other Songs of Zion, especially Pss 46 and 48. The Asaph psalms are not adverse to the *Chaoskampf* traditions (74:12-17; 77:12-21), but they are not used to reinforce Yahweh's election of Zion, as in the Songs of Zion, nor do they join *Völkerkampf* motifs to the *Chaoskampf*, despite the presence of earthly enemies in at least one of those psalms that use the West Semitic myth (74:1-8). That Psa 76 takes up the *Völkerkampf* aspect of the Songs of Zion identifies it with this set of hymns, but, by only taking that motif, it sets itself apart from other Zion hymns, particularly Pss 46 and 48. There appears to be a reference to the Song of the Sea in Psa 76:7 (רֶכֶב וְסוּס, cp. Exo 15:1), and it is interesting to note that the psalm only draws from the martial imagery of that victory song, not the mythic.[91] In the third act of the psalm (76:8-10), Yahweh is described as a terrifying storm god, who thunderously proclaims judgment from the sky, but the language is much more general than the battle against the sea in Pss 46 and 48. If the previous observations about Neo-Assyrian leonine references from this psalm hold true (section 4.2), perhaps this particular psalm can be located at the end of the 8th c. BCE.

4.5.2 Zion and Yahweh's Locus of Action

Refugees from the north would not have come down to Jerusalem specifically because of their belief in the inviolability of Zion, but simply because of the opportunity available in an

[91] For a classic elaboration on the connections between the Song of the Sea and other West Semitic myths, see Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 112-144.

urban setting for landless individuals. Their settlement in the area of Jerusalem was certainly a "pre-Zion theology phenomenon,"[92] or at least before they had subscribed to it, but Jerusalem's ability to withstand the threats of the Assyrian army would have provided a powerful apology for Yahweh's activity from Zion among the northern tradents. Perhaps this particular psalm of Zion is a restatement of the salient features of Zion theology for a group that has not always subscribed to such notions. This avoidance of praise for the city can be explained by suggesting that the northerners felt more comfortable extolling the deity they shared with Jerusalem, rather than their new city. Though the newcomers to Jerusalem may have shared a faith in the same God, they were aware of the Zion traditions, and were cognizant of God's redemption of this city in particular, but they would rather praise Yahweh than the city.

In fact, in Psa 76 there is a much stronger emphasis on the agent of salvation than in the location of salvation. Zion, in Psalm 76, is passingly mentioned as the place where Yahweh resides, and is paired with the older "Salem" from the patriarchal traditions (76:3; Gen 14:18). It seems that the psalm is more about the God who acts from and is manifested in Zion, than the sanctuary of Zion and its distinctive privileges.[93] Psalm 76 still maintains that God has ensured and enacted peace from Zion, and even localizes that action (שָׁמָּה שִׁבַּר, Psa 76:4), but the emphasis lies more on the one who performs that action than the place itself. The result is that Psa 76 is not so much a song about Zion, but about the God who is manifested in Zion.[94]

What makes this psalm unique is that it is within a northern collection of psalms and, if the preceding thesis concerning the northern origin of the Asaphite collection stands, is a hymn to the southern city of Jerusalem on the lips of northerners. Two points from this psalm stood out: a focus on the *Völkerkampf* at the expense of the *Chaoskampf*, and a focus on the agent of salvation instead of the location. Unlike the first two Zion psalms (Pss 46, 48), the Asaph Zion song is more concerned with the practice of the cult and divine action from the city than the city itself. While this may seem a bit out of place, the interested parties of Hezekiah's time would have benefited from such a song. Politically, describing Jerusalem in language familiar to those

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[92] Burke, "An Anthropological Model," 48.

[93] Broyles, *Psalms*, 312.

[94] "Pss 46 and 48 … offer specific descriptions of the city. Psalm 76, on the other hand, does little more than situate God's dwelling there as a prelude to the divine ordering and peace-making activity" (Nasuti, *Tradition History*, 153).

from the north would help integrate them into the population and ensure that the significance of Hezekiah's victory over the Assyrians for the legitimization of the Davidic throne was communicated to everyone in the city. It would also benefit the northern communities themselves, as they may have sought to make sense of Samaria's destruction by the Assyrians on the one hand, and Jerusalem's escape on the other.

4.6 Psalm 78: An Appeal to the North

4.6.1 Psalm 78 and Hezekiah

Psalm 78 stands as the longest psalm in the collection, and is the most important for understanding the relationship between the psalms of Asaph and the Davidic ruler. It is unique in the Psalter in that it identifies itself as "teaching" (תורה) and has a clear didactic tone. The liturgist, however, speaks with more authority than a simple teacher, as his style draws a number of comparisons with Moses' authoritative sermon on Israel's history in Deut 32.[95] The purpose of the text is not simply to show that Israel has had a sinful past, but to conclude that the Zion and David traditions are the next locus of God's continuous redemptive work with his people.[96] In two separate, but parallel, structures, the psalmist crafts this message: the first cycle (78:12-39) recounts the journeys through the wilderness, God's provision, and Israel's continued unbelief; the second (40-72) recites the movement from slavery in Egypt to the settlement of Canaan, and ends with the destruction of the northern sanctuary at Shiloh by the Philistines and the subsequent election of Zion and David.[97] The conclusions of both these cycles are set in parallel: just as God has extended mercy in the face of rebellion (78:38), so he has chosen a leader (David) and a sanctuary (Zion) despite his people's rebellion (78:67-72).[98] By drawing examples from Israel's exodus and wilderness traditions, the psalmist attempts to show how God has "rejected the tent of Joseph" but has chosen "the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion, which he

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[95] Richard Clifford, "In Zion and David a New Beginning: An Interpretation of Psalm 78," in *Traditions and Transformation: Turning Points in Biblical Faith*, ed. Baruch Halpern and Jon Levenson (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1981), 130-131.

[96] Clifford, "In Zion and David," 141.

[97] Shiloh is certainly identified as Khirbet Seilun in the central hill country of Ephraim. At the end of IA I, the site experienced a "fierce conflagration," with the obvious culprit being the Philistines (Israel Finkelstein, "Seilun, Khirbet," *ABD* 5 [1992]:1069).

[98] Clifford, "In Zion and David," 136-137.

loves" (78:67-68). Though the northern sanctuary ends in ruins, this psalm directs the attention of the audience towards the Davidic king and the temple in Jerusalem.

Ephraim and the northern tribes appear to be one of the main focuses of attention in this psalm. After the introduction of the psalm (78:1-8), the body of the deuteronomistic account of Israel's past begins by mentioning the defeat of the Ephraimites in battle. Not much is said about the battle itself, but the reason for their defeat is explained: they did not keep God's covenant, they refused to walk according to his law, and they forgot his works (78:7). Ephraim's failures, therefore, are part of the psalmist's "instruction" for the "next generation" (78:6), that they would not make the same mistakes as their predecessors. While the exodus and wilderness traditions, as described in this psalm, do not separate out the tribe of Judah from Israel's sins, there is a definite northern focus by the liturgist. First, the northern tribes were particularly fond of the exodus and wilderness wanderings (1 Kgs 12:28; Hos 2:14-15; 11:1-5; 12:9, 13; 13:4; Amos 2:9-10; 4:10; 5:25; 9:7), and using this stream of tradition would have been rhetorically effective to the north, as their prophets, Hosea and Amos, had already done. Second, the historical narrative ends at the destruction of the Israelite sanctuary at Shiloh, in Ephraim, by the Philistines (78:60-61). This rejection of a northern sanctuary then immediately leads into the election of a southern sanctuary. Finally, though the verbal parallels with the whole of the DtrH are clear, there are a number of marked parallels with 2 Kings 17:7-21, particularly in the narrative of the north's apostasy.[99] Unlike the summary of the northern kingdom in 2 Kings 17, by stopping the narrative at David the Psalmist has avoided discussing Jeroboam's rebellion against the house of David.

At first glance, the progression of the narrative may suggest that the psalm should be placed in the time of David or Solomon, as they attempted to shore up support from the hardly enthusiastic northern population. However, the psalm identifies itself as a reflection on the failures of the fathers (78:4-8), who were "stubborn and rebellious" and "whose heart was not

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[99] There are a number of phrases that show up in both: Psa 78:5 (וְתוֹרָה שָׂם בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה אֶת־אֲבוֹתֵינוּ) // 2 Kgs 17:13 (כְּכָל־הַתּוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִי אֶת־אֲבֹתֵיכֶם); Psa 78:22 (כִּי לֹא הֶאֱמִינוּ בֵּאלֹהִים וְלֹא בָטְחוּ בִּישׁוּעָתוֹ:) // 2 Kgs 17:14 (וַיַּקְשׁוּ אֶת־עָרְפָּם כְּעֹרֶף אֲבוֹתָם אֲשֶׁר לֹא הֶאֱמִינוּ בַּיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם:); Psa 78:59 (וַיִּמְאַס מְאֹד בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל:) // 2 Kgs 17:20 (וַיִּמְאַס יְהוָה בְּכָל־זֶרַע יִשְׂרָאֵל). Clifford also lists the significant lexemes that are common between the two texts (Clifford, "In Zion and David," 139-140). Parallels, however, do not indicate dependency, as Psalm 78 appears to be pre-Deuteronomic (John Day, "Pre-Deuteronomic Allusions," 8-12).

steadfast" (78:8). These "lessons from antiquity" (78:2) should not be restricted to the exodus and wilderness sections, but should also include the accounts of Shiloh's destruction and Judah's election under David at the end of the psalm.[100] The perspective of the liturgist is therefore sufficiently removed from the events of David's life, and could be put in a context similar to an early version of the DtrH. The reign of Hezekiah, which witnessed one of the earliest collections from this school of thought, is thus a reasonable location for this psalm.

Significantly, it was not the people of Israel that God had rejected, but the political leadership and the shrine located in the north (Psa 78:69, 71). Schniedewind suggests that the "tent" (אֹהֶל) of Joseph and the "tribe" (שֵׁבֶט) of Ephraim (78:67) are references to the religious and political leadership, respectively.[101] The reference to Joseph's "tent" could be to their shrine, especially with the tent-sanctuary (מִשְׁכַּן) at Shiloh in context (78:60), and the mention of the "tribe" (שֵׁבֶט) of Ephraim could be to the sceptre (שֵׁבֶט; cf. Gen 49:10; Jud 5:14) of political rule. A northern audience bereft of these two institutions should certainly be assumed for this psalm, and the psalmist urges that they are now free to come under the hegemony of Judah and to worship in the temple in Jerusalem. Such an appeal to a Davidic golden age fits within Hezekiah's priorities. Because the psalmist does not detail Jeroboam's rebellion against the house of David, the implicit offer to recognize the legitimacy of David and Zion at the end of the psalm ignores the complicated religious and political environment of the divided kingdom and hearkens to a more idyllic time. Though they know that, in the past, they had rejected David and Zion, this psalm effectively wipes clean the slate and urges those from the north to seize one more opportunity at making that decision. The glowing praise given to Hezekiah in 2 Kings 18:5 ("there was none like him among all the kings of Judah"), his commitment to centralize the sanctuary (2 Kgs 18:4; 2 Chr 29), and his desire to include the northern kingdom in his reforms (2 Chr 30:1), create an environment where the invitation in Psa 78 finds a proper context. More than a political statement, however, this psalm would have provided the now state-less northern tribes a hope in a renewed, Davidic kingdom.

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[100] William Schniedewind, *Society and the Promise of David: The Reception History of 2 Samuel 7:1-17* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 68.

[101] William Schniedewind, *Society and the Promise of David*, 68.

4.6.2 Exodus and Zion

This psalm contains a unique blend of two traditions that, before the 8th c. BCE, did not show many signs of interaction. The exodus and wilderness traditions enjoyed a healthy life in the north, but southern traditions focused more on Yahweh's election of Zion and David.[102] The northern kingdom continued the old tribal history of Israel, as evident from their prophets, while Judah chose to focus on the more recent developments concerning Zion and David. Jeroboam's act of religious apostasy, according to the Deuteronomist, in establishing two golden calves at Dan and Bethel, reflects this tension between established and innovative traditions. When they were set up, Jeroboam proclaimed: "You have gone up to Jerusalem long enough. Behold your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt" (1 Kgs 12:28). Accounts of the tribal past, however, were not unknown in Judah, as 8th c. prophets occasionally drew from the exodus (Is 10:24, 26; 11:16; Mic 6:3-4; 7:15), but these references make up only a small percentage of material used by these authors.[103] Though the J document also likely has a southern provenance, its lack of interaction with the Zion tradition from Judahite texts leaves a number of questions unanswered.[104] Judah's approach to legitimization by appealing to divine election, especially in the context of statehood, is found throughout the ancient world. Between the two Israelite states, Judah is the innovator, as the political governance of Israel from Jeroboam continued in the traditional collaborative form of government evident from the book of

[102] Daniel Fleming goes so far as to say that it was only in the northern kingdom of Israel that there "was a perceived need to explain the people's existence before and apart from kings" and "all primary phases of the Bible's account of the past before David originate and reflect Israel's political perspective" (Fleming, *The Legacy*, 28). Brueggeman envisions the conflict between these two traditions as an overarching theme in Israel's history: "The entire phase of Israel's history is easily understood as a confrontation of kings and prophets, thus continuing the claims of the Davidic-Solomonic commitment to order and continuity and the Mosaic affirmation of freedom even at the cost of discontinuity … The political institutions of the northern and southern kingdoms are likely vehicles for these two traditions of religion and social vision," Brueggeman, "Trajectories," 172. Though our data from inscriptions is not comprehensive, it is interesting to see how these two traditions play out in the epigraphic material. References to "Yahweh of Samaria" and "Yahweh of Teman" (cp. Jud 5:4) are found in the caravanserai of Kuntillet Ajrud, and are coupled with exodus-esque mountaintop theophanies, while references to the "God of Jerusalem" in one of the Khirbet Beit Lei inscriptions from Judah refer to Yahweh as possessor of the hills around Jerusalem.

[103] I have argued elsewhere in this paper that these references from Isaiah were directed to northerners, and were perhaps chosen for rhetorical effect. The later chapters of Micah likewise also date to after the fall of the northern kingdom.

[104] The J document has historically been placed in the time of the United Monarchy, under David and Solomon, but very few indicators are present to make this confirmation certain. Those texts that directly allude to the Davidic king (Gen 49:8-12; Num 24:17-19) could fit a number of rulers from the house of David.

Judges.[105] Whenever a new dynasty came to power in the ancient world, as an apology for their lack of royal descent, they had to connect their ascension with the will of a deity.[106] Like the exodus traditions did in the north (and also for Judah in the post-exilic period), the traditions surrounding David and Zion functioned to legitimate a particular group as elect from God, but, unlike the exodus, were specific only to the city of Jerusalem and the tribe of Judah.[107]

In an article outlining the use of exodus traditions in the book of Psalms, Susan Gillingham only notes five pre-exilic psalms (Pss 77, 78, 80, 81, 114) and four post-exilic psalms (Pss 105, 106, 135, 136) that employ these traditions.[108] Four of the five pre-exilic psalms that refer to the exodus are found in the Asaph psalms, which this thesis has argued are northern, and Psa 114, by drawing close parallels between the Red Sea and the Jordan river, may have ties with the northern sanctuary at Gilgal (Josh 3-6).[109] Even though the exodus plays so heavily on Israelite consciousness in the Pentateuch and the northern prophets, the dearth of such traditions in pre-exilic liturgical worship likely is due to the southern provenance of most of the Psalter, especially

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[105] That is, a form of government that, though including a monarch, is ultimately governed by the body politic of the tribal organization. At least until the house of Omri, there was no significant dynastic succession, nor was there a fixed capital city. "… The standard scheme of a united monarchy, followed by the secession of the north from David's royal house, ignores the simple continuity of the people governed by Saul, David, and Solomon with the Israel ruled by Jeroboam, Omri, and Jehu. Judah is the outlier, requiring special explanation. Such an Israel began as an association of peoples not organized as a kingdom and its monarchy represents a transition, built onto a political tradition that did not require the fixed institution of kingship. Kings had to deal with the prior structures, to win their support, to undermine their power, or to put them out of business—but nevertheless to acknowledge them," Fleming, *The Legacy of Israel*, 32-33.

[106] For example, in the Zakkur stele from northern Syria, the speaker, Zakkur, describes himself as king of Hamath and Luʿash and that he was a "poor man" (אש ענה), but does not mention his genealogical pedigree at all. Instead, he claims that Baʿlshmayn "delivered me and stood beside me" (ו[חצלנ]י וקם עמי) and "made me king over Hazrach" (ז[ח]רך [ו]המלכני בעלשמ[ין על] , lines 2-3). For a transcription of the text, see KAI 202, and for a translation see "The Inscription of Zakkur, King of Hamath," trans. Alan Millard (COS 2.35:155). The Tell Dan stele (KAI 310) also has a similar pattern, where Hazael, the speaker, has no patronymic given, but Hadad is explicitly stated to have "made [him] king" (אנה [ית]אֹ֯המלכ הדד [ו], line 4). That he emphasized his own legitimacy to rule ("Hadad made *me*, *myself* king"), supports the statements in Kings about his role as a usurper to the throne (2 Kgs 9:7-15). For other examples of divine election as a legitimating apology of new monarchs, including texts from Hattusili, Asshurbanipal, Nabonidus, Cyrus, and Darius, see Andrew Knapp, *Royal Apologetic in the Ancient Near East*, WAWSS 4 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2013), 47-48.

[107] In the post-exilic exodus psalms listed by Gillingham (105, 106, 135, 136), the use of the tradition aligns well with its use in Second Isaiah, where the restoration of Zion and return from exile, as well as the lifting up of a people brought low, find ready parallels with the Egyptian sojourn (Susan Gillingham, "The Exodus Tradition," 39-44).

[108] Susan Gillingham, "The Exodus Tradition," 28-39. Her criteria for identifying the exodus tradition was the presence of three points: the escape from Egypt, the figure of Moses, and the crossing of the Reed Sea. The bounds of her search necessarily exclude other references to the exodus in the Psalms that are less overt (Psa 66:6). However, this does not substantially alter the impact of her argument.

[109] For a further discussion on this topic, see Kraus, *Psalms 60-150,* 371-373.

when one compares the number of references to the exodus to those for Zion.[110] These psalms have a northern provenance, but because they have come to us through the mediation of Zion's Psalter, they naturally took on a function in the Jerusalem cultus. In this respect, the integration of exodus and Zion traditions in Psa 78 represents a unique moment in Israel's history. Gillingham observes that all of the pre-exilic psalms have a political function in their connection of Judah and Jerusalem to the tribal past. Psalm 78's social use of the exodus tradition functions to describe the Zion tradition as the explicit culmination of God's redemptive history through the

[110] Granted, most of the lament psalms do not rely on established Israelite traditions, but on the "My God" tradition (Broyles, *Psalms*, 23), but even a cursory examination of vocabulary in the Psalms shows that "Zion" appears far more often than "Moses," "Aaron," or "Egypt."

exodus, and lends depth and greater security to Jerusalem's own election.[111] Within the historical context elaborated above, the handful of pre-exilic exodus psalms functioned specifically to tie in Judah's traditions with their new Israelite neighbours, and to show how Judah was the ultimate inheritor of the promises to Israel's ancestors.[112] This reconstruction becomes more interesting when we consider that the psalms of Asaph were not just northern psalms co-opted by Judah, but

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[111] Gillingham, "The Exodus Tradition," 45. Remarkably, there are absolutely no references to the Davidic king in the exodus psalms commonly associated with the post-exilic period. Their sweep of history often includes both the Patriarchs and the exodus, but stops short at the exodus (105:43-45), the conquest (135:8-12; 136:17-22), or the period of Judges (106:34-46).

The integration of these two tradition streams was not without its criticisms, however. The material in the psalm that leads up to the destruction of Shiloh demonstrates that God can do as he pleases with his sanctuary, according to the ability of his people to keep their side of the covenant, but this stands beside the eternal nature of the election of Zion. Jeremiah, in his ministry, prefers the former of these to the latter, and even similarly draws on the Shiloh story as an example of what may happen to Jerusalem's temple should the people continue in their covenantal unfaithfulness (Jer 7:14; 26:6). His opposition to popular appeals to Zion's election do not find their first resistance among the priests in Jerusalem, but, rather, in his hometown of Anathoth, and the types of criticisms he receives are not substantially different from those that come from figures in the temple (18:18-20; 20:1-6; 26:1-24; 29:1-32; 36:1-26; 38:1-28; cf. S. Dean McBride, "Jeremiah and the Levitical Priests of Anathoth," in *Thus Says the Lord: Essays on the Former and Latter Prophets in Honor of Robert R. Wilson*, ed. John J. Ahn and Stephen L. Cook [London: T&T Clark, 2009], 191). It is important to note that Jeremiah has so far been included in the pre-exilic sources that are affected by northern influences. Anathoth was a Levitical town (Jos 21:18) with strong ties to the Elide priest Abiathar (1 Sam 22:20-23; 1 Kgs 2:27), as this is the location that Abiathar was banished during the reign of Solomon (1 Kgs 2:26). There is strong reason to believe that Jeremiah is a representative of this northern Levitical group (cf. Wilson, *Prophecy and Society*, 233-235). Through a series of genealogical connections, McBride suggests that there are a number of named Anathothites in the administration of Judah and the Jerusalem temple during the reigns of Josiah and his successors. If the priests Maaseiah (Jer 35:4) and Zephaniah (Jer 21:1; 29:25-26, 29; 37:3), as well as the scribe Shaphan (2 Kgs 22:3), are related to Jeremiah through Hilkiah to Shallum (cf. Jer 1:1; 32:7), then Levites from Anathoth—Elides—had been reincorporated into the temple and state apparatus (McBride, "Jeremiah and the Levitical Priests," 192-194).

After the centralization efforts of Hezekiah, and later Josiah, Levitical families separated from worship in rural sanctuaries became a class of people in need of social aid. The "Levites in your gates" from Deut 18:1-8 are listed among the widows, fatherless, and displaced persons in the collateral damage due to centralization and the disenfranchisement from local shrines. Part of the solution, according to Deuteronomy, was to incorporate them into the temple personal at the central sanctuary, which was expanding and growing in influence due to the reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah. Concomitant with this movement of village Levites to Jerusalem was the merger of Levitical and temple-based ideologies, such as the exodus and Zion traditions—a mixture clearly seen in the opposition to Jeremiah from Anathoth. However, not everyone among the traditional community of the Levites supported this new association with the centre of state society. Stephen Cook notes such in Jeremiah: "The book [of Jeremiah] betrays clear signs of conflict between two groups of Levites: those who insisted on priests maintaining their critical leverage over against the crown and others, re-enfranchised as part of King Josiah's reforms, who appeared to the former group to have sold out to very dangerous, complacent thinking in Jerusalem" (Stephen Cook, "Those Stubborn Levites: Overcoming Levitical Disenfranchisement," in *Levites and Priests in Biblical History and Tradition*, ed. Mark A. Leuchter and Jeremy M. Hutton [Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011], 161). The opposition faced by Jeremiah from the town of Anathoth would then be from priests who served in the central sanctuary and were upset that he was upbraiding this new comprise they had settled on (Cook, "Those Stubborn Levites," 168). Psalm 78 represents the type of Levitical perspective that Jeremiah opposed, or was at least hesitant towards: one that unequivocally merged the ancient, tribal exodus traditions with the state-centred Zion traditions. Jeremiah's preaching would instead take a more Deuteronomic and conditional approach to the covenant and Yahwistic sanctuary, in that he argued that the privileges of dynasty and temple are not irrevocable.

[112] Gillingham would see all of the other Asaph psalms that mention the exodus (77, 80, 81) as attempting to graft the exodus tradition into Judah's ideology as a legitimization tactic. For her arguments, see Gillingham, "The Exodus Tradition," 28-34.

were actually used and employed by northern communities in Jerusalem. The process described above was not just an assimilation of Israel's traditions, but an active reinterpretation by those tradents responsible for such traditions.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 Summary

Though the psalms themselves were not composed so as to be a medium for historical data, they nonetheless reflect the circumstances of their times. Psalms are often dated by means of telling references ("By the waters of Babylon," Psa 137:1), or by adhering to period-specific traditions (i.e. royal psalms), but the historical setting of a large number of psalms cannot be answered with these criteria. The proposal put forward in this study is that a collection of psalms ascribed to liturgical guilds with a definable tradition history and significant references to their milieu can be adequately employed in historical reconstruction. The various references to geography, traditions, and ideologies contribute to a fuller picture of the collection's historical background—a background primarily based on the conflation of northern and southern material. Because they share membership in a similar tradition source, each member in the Asaphite group contributes to their broader contextual location.

The liturgists behind the psalms of Asaph represent an active group in the bustling literary scene around the time of Hezekiah. Among the prophets and scribes of Jerusalem, the guild of Asaph provided their northern audience with liturgical texts to comprehend the shifting political landscapes of the southern Levant in the 8th c. BCE. The haphazard geographic and tradition-historical provenance of these psalms is best reconciled by assuming a fundamental mixture between northern and southern material in the growing and cosmopolitan city of Jerusalem. Not only did these liturgists find themselves in a new urban setting, but they also had to reconcile their traditions of psalmody and public worship with those shared by their Judahite neighbours. While maintaining their own inherited distinctives, this new setting produced a number of distinctly Judahite features within the corpus, as well as a specific concern for the Judahite state apparatus.

It is in this setting that the various points of emphasis that characterize this particular Judahite state stand out: the importance of the Davidic throne (78:70-72; 80:16-18), the centrality of Zion (Psa 76; 78:67-68), and the invitation to the northern citizens to "come home" (78:71-72). Specific mention of Assyria in Psa 83:9 as the worst of foes places this psalm

in Judah's period of conflict with the Neo-Assyrian empire near the end of the 8th c. BCE, perhaps even Sennacherib's campaign in 701 BCE. The use of leonine imagery in Pss 50 and 76 describing the activity of God is at home in this specific moment of time, when the Assyrian monarch would often style themselves as such. The crisis behind Psalm 80 closely matches that of 701 BCE, especially in the use of a similar metaphor with Isaiah to describe the situation (80:8-13; Isa 5:1-6), and in the solar imagery evident in Psa 80, which may find a ready parallel in the iconography of Hezekiah's *lmlk* seals. Similarities in the Asaphite collection with Hezekiah's prayer in 2 Kgs 19:15-19 provide a perspective into approximate responses to the Assyrian war machine: both Psa 80 and Hezekiah's prayer would have been performed in front of the ark of the covenant, and the motivation given to Yahweh for deliverance from an international foe in Psa 83:19 is incredibly similar to Hezekiah's own 2 Kgs 19:19. In sum, there seems to be enough data to date these particular Asaphite psalms (50, 76, 78, 80, 83) to the age of Hezekiah by their reflections of both Hezekian ideology and the larger political threats of the day.

As new developments occurred in the political and religious history of ancient Israel, their psalms and liturgies adapted to these new environments, and the psalms of Asaph are no exception. A number of psalms throughout this collection refer to the Babylonian exile, an event well represented in Judahite sources (cf. Pss 74, 77, 79), and others refer to the celebration of an annual covenant festival (Pss 50, 81)—northern in origin—which would have been particularly relevant during Josiah's reforms and the publication of Deuteronomy. If the Asaphites were active in shaping the liturgy of the Jerusalemite temple during the reign of Hezekiah, it is astonishing that they remained relevant well into the post-exilic period. The content and form of their psalmody changed over this time, moving from prophecy and communal lament to hymns and praises, and their role in Chronicles is distinct from the "canonical" psalms; nevertheless, they remained an important part of the practice of worship in Jerusalem. As members of a refugee community, they integrated well into their new setting.

5.2 Directions for Future Research

As any graduate student will attest, an MA thesis provides its writer with a number of frustrations. Perhaps chief among them is the tantalizing prospect of mastery in the subject, and the culminating realization that their work has only surveyed the field from afar. After researching and writing on the use of northern traditions in Jerusalem's Psalter as a tool for historical reconstruction, a number of questions remain unanswered.

First, important directions of research lie in identifying the different types of northern traditions that were either accepted as dogma or regarded as anathema by southern tradents—in short, how the north was received in the south. The Deuteronomist's evaluation of the state cult and royal dynasties of the northern kingdom is overwhelmingly negative, but certain tradition groups from the north, like the Asaphites, were welcomed into formal worship at Jerusalem. This leaves an open question of what social, religious, or political position the Asaphites would have occupied while serving in the north, and whether or not they were representative of mainstream Israelite religious thought. If northern psalms beyond the psalms of Asaph can be identified and collected based on a variety of criteria, perhaps these texts would help illumine new directions in the history of northern Israel's religion, and the contribution of the northern kingdom to the theological development of the Hebrew Bible.

Second, the significance of p.Amherst 63 for further investigation cannot be overstated. In this unique document, one finds a narrative of northerners arriving in Palmyra and joining a community of other displaced persons during the time of the Neo-Assyrian empire. One of their songs of worship is clearly an antecedent for Psa 20—a psalm which otherwise has no indication of being northern. If the conclusion of this thesis was that northern traditions were incorporated into Jerusalem's worship, it is striking that the relationship between Psa 20 and p.Amherst 63 is one of near total revision. This papyrus provides an interesting example of a psalm that could be classified as northern in origin solely by means of new epigraphic evidence. Surely, more material like this will become available to philologists and exegetes with continued excavations and discoveries.

Due to space constraints, I was not able to devote time to each of the psalms in the collection. The psalms chosen for discussion in chapter 4 all dealt with the aggression of the Neo-Assyrian empire and the reign of Hezekiah, but other psalms in the collection relate to later periods of time. This guild was active over a long period, and continued to produce material through the late pre-exilic and into the exilic period. Psalms 50 and 81, in particular, are significant in their connection of covenant and cultic prophecy. In one document from Ashurbanipal's library (SAA 9 3), there is a strange reference in a prophetic cult liturgy to the "covenant tablets of Aššur" (*ṭuppi adê anniu ša Aššūr*, SAA 9 3 ii 26-32) being ceremoniously brought before Esarhaddon on a cushion and read aloud. Similarly, recent excavations at Tel Tayinat have revealed the covenant tablet (Akk. *ṭuppi adê*) of the Succession Treaty of Esarhaddon (STE) in the inner sanctum of their tripartite temple, indicating a connection between this text and public worship. These connections so described may be immaterial, but one of the most programmatic statements on covenant from the Hebrew Bible comes from Deuteronomy—a document heavily influenced in form and content by the STE, an *adê*. Though, like Deuteronomy, the prophetic liturgies of Pss 50 and 81 may have ancient roots, their introduction into Jerusalem's worship may be tied to similar religious and political movements in the 7th c. BCE which led to the publication of Deuteronomy in Josiah's reign. The connections between Deuteronomy, STE, and the prophetic liturgies of Pss 50, 81, and SAA 9 3 would provide a compelling commentary on the politics of the 7th c. BCE in the southern Levant.

Finally, there is room to discuss the theological implications of reading Asaph within its context. In a period of human history where modern exiles and deportations are all too common —or even people moving to a different place of worship—it is helpful to look at an ancient model of acceptance and accommodation within a central sanctuary. Displaced northerners came to Jerusalem and, though they brought a different set of inherited traditions, they were allowed to maintain their distinctives while worshipping at a new sanctuary. Perhaps these texts provide space to discuss the acceptance of theological diversity as complementary, not contradictory, modes of worship.

5.3 Conclusion

The Psalms are far more than a dusty repository of ancient Israel's expressions of prayer and praise to their God. Positing an historical context not only contributes to the broader historical questions, but also provides parallel contexts for modern readers.[1] As James describes, the characters in the pages of the Hebrew Bible were human beings just like us (Jam 5:17), and the exilic experience of these cult singers is one that has often repeated itself in human history. Without home, land, or sanctuary, their faith in God needed to adjust. In the wake of this tragedy and loss, the Asaphites began to worship in a different sanctuary without removing those elements of their tradition that were unique to them and without denying the validity of their new religious context. Zion was their new place of worship and the Davidic king their new sovereign, but they maintained the liturgical freedom to worship in a way similar to how they did before their arrival. Even if this was effected for political gain by Hezekiah, these complementary tensions between their expressions of identity within their new context provide a beautiful picture of unity through diversity. The Deuteronomist may tell Israel to accept the *gēr* into their kinship groups, but these psalms indicate how to worship with them once they get there.

[1] Gerstenberger's comments on this topic are worth repeating: "… My efforts to approach the Bible consistently from its human side, to tie texts to their social (and liturgical) roots, to admit social conditionings of biblical authors and modern exegetes, of theological conceptualizations and ethical judgments, does serve a thoroughly theological purpose. The word of God is known to us and communicated to us only by way of contextual events and sayings, narrations and confessions … From the different life situations of old, then, we may make inferences as to our social and personal situations today, and God speaks to us within exactly these rather earthly configurations. The Word which turned flesh really incorporated (and still incorporates) the conditions of our existence and our personal acting therein," Erhard Gerstenberger, "The Psalms: Genre, Life Situations, and Theologies—Towards a Hermeneutics of Social Stratification," in *Diachronic and Synchronic: Readings the Psalms in Real Time: Proceedings of the Baylor Symposium on the Book of Psalms*, ed. Joel S. Burnett, W.H. Bellinger Jr., W. Dennis Tucker Jr. (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 91-92.

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